Hafa Adai!

SUNDAY

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CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

Have you already read the newly enacted labor reform law?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

INSIDE

Chic Home

Jerome Dahan's residence is pure Left Bank elan woven with kicked-back Californian charm.

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING... Page 10

Mine Survivor

When Mohammed Malek left home to collect firewood, his mother warned him never to stray from the road.

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Tom's Son

He's tall and slender with neatly cropped dark hair but his "lost-puppy eyes" confirm he is Tom Hanks' son.

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Nursing board hikes fees

VISITORS CENTER JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Tourists explore the museum featuring the World War II battles of Saipan and Tinian inside the American Memorial Park Visitors Center yesterday.

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Board of Nurse Examiners is now charging 30 to 400 percent more for its services.

It is the first time in 25 years that the board has increased its fees.

Emergency regulations adopted by the nursing board created a whole new license fee schedule for advanced practice registered nurses, graduate nurses, certified nurse technicians, and certified nursing assistants.

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Wyatt resigns from NMC

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
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REPORTER

Wyatt

Northern Marianas College academic dean Danny Wyatt has resigned from his post after more than a decade of work at the college.

See LOCAL on Page 4

Guam braces for peaceful invasion

By BLAINE HARDEN
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

HAGATNA, Guam—People on this faraway island—a U.S. territory 7,824 miles west of Los Angeles—delight in calling Guam the "tip of the spear" for its role defending U.S. interests in the Far East.

See TIP on Page 4

The Pentagon has chosen the sultry tropical island of Guam to become a rapid-response platform for problems ranging from pirates to terrorists to tsunamis, as well as a highly visible reminder to China that the United States is nearby and watching.

THE WASHINGTON POST

Capt. Robert Lee of the Joint Guam Program Office-Forward talks with a Marine on the northwestern coast of Guam, where the administrative headquarters is to be built for 8,000 Marines, due to begin arriving in 2012.

Around the CNMI

‘Take back funds from tobacco control fund’

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Diabetes Coalition, together with other coalitions and prevention leaders, is teaming up to find ways to take back the funds from the Tobacco Control Fund as per Public Law 13-38.

“Anytime somebody smokes or drinks, there’s a tax. Thirty percent of all those taxes go into the Tobacco Control Fund,” said Coalition chair George Cruz. “The last quarter of 2007 and first quarter of 2008 have generated a little bit over $2 million and every quarter it continuously generates.”

Public Law 13-38 recognizes that smoking is the single most critical risk associated with the leading chronic diseases in the CNMI. “It is therefore in the best interest of the CNMI to increase taxes on alcohol and tobacco products. This increase in revenue would be reserved for funding tobacco control programs.”

According to Cruz, “We have not been given that money to address these issues in the past three years. We don’t know why.”

“So right now we’re putting pressure on everybody, so we can try to have a bigger success in addressing these issues,” he added.

Cruz said that “the problem with the new Legislature is that they don’t want to spend and that is fine.”

He emphasized that prevention leaders and the coalition are only looking for the funding that they deserve and have been denied them the past three years.

“Only $2 million a quarter. We’re looking at an average of $6 to $8 million a year. That is still a third of what was spent on the dialysis center,” Cruz said.

“But to help prevent and to reduce cancer and other issues, it’s worth it; $4 million is worth it,” he said.

Heart disease and cancer make up more than 60 percent of the off-island medical referral costs. More than $2 million is spent each year treating diseases related to tobacco and alcohol use in the CNMI.

Public Law 13-38 states that “studies indicate that the pervasive use of tobacco among minors and young adults will likely decrease if the price of tobacco is increased. In response to concerns for the health of the youth and public as a whole, a number of states have increased the excise taxes on tobacco products.

“Furthermore the Healthy People 2010 Initiative, which the CNMI has adopted, has identified the objective to increase the national average of state and federal taxes on tobacco products to $2.00 by year 2010.”

MICRO BEACH JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Tourists spend their afternoon frolicking at Micro Beach yesterday. Overlooking the beautiful island of Managaha, the beach is considered one of the finest white sand beaches on Saipan and a popular destination for windsurfers, snorkelers, sunbathers and picnickers.

Radewagen kicks off GOP search for delegates

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
rianne_pangelinan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Amata Coleman Radewagen, the Republican Party’s National Committeewoman for American Samoa, departed Saipan early this morning after a two-day visit to help kick off the Republican Party’s monthlong process of selecting its delegates to the National Convention.

Friday night’s event was also a joint fundraiser for the Republican Party and for Radewagen, who is running for a seat in the U.S. House of Representative.

Radewagen grew up on Saipan and considers the island her second home.

“As a politician, I was tempted to follow a campaign custom that you have here to remind voters of your family lineage. I was going to suggest she [National Committeewoman Marylou S. Ada] introduce me as Amata Coleman Sablan Palacios Radewagen because the blood of these islands runs through the veins of my family,” Radewagen said.

She added that the bonds of her family and families “of this beautiful commonwealth are permanent.”

“They are my family’s legacy and my family is very proud of that union. So, it gives me genuine pleasure to be able to return to my second home, the island of Saipan,” she said.

Radewagen said that being far from the U.S. mainland, “we often can feel isolated and out of the mainstream of what is going on the country.”

However, come Feb. 23, American Samoa, Saipan, and Guam will be electing delegates to the Republican National Convention.

“In November 2008, over 100 million people will choose one of two people to hold the most important job on Earth—President of the United States,” Radewagen said.

She also pointed out that the two people will have been selected by a much smaller group—the delegates to the two national political party conventions.

In the case of the Republicans, the winning candidate will need 1,191 votes. Each delegate will have one vote. Nine of those votes will come from American Samoa, another nine from Guam, and then another nine from the Northern Mariana Islands.

“Those 27 votes will form a bigger delegation than 10 states and the District of Columbia. In fact, if you add the delegates from our sister territories in the Caribbean, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, we would have the 10th largest delegation to the convention. That represents a lot of potential clout if we stick together and use it wisely,” Radewagen said.

She added that the votes coming in from five territories count “even more” in developing the platform on which their nominee will run for president “because each state and each territory will have two members on the 112-member–platform committee.”

“The two members from CNMI will have votes on that committee that will count every bit as much as the two votes from New York or California or Texas,” Radewagen said.

The event will also lead up to the upcoming first-ever Commonwealth Republican Convention on Feb. 23, 2008, to elect six prime delegates and six alternate to the 39th Republican National Convention to be held on Sept. 1 to 4, 2008 in St. Paul, Minnesota.

The Commonwealth Republican Party will for the first time cast its selection on who will be the next GOP presidential candidate. The CNMI has nine voting delegates to the convention.

Along with Ada, Republican chairman Tom Pangelinan and National Committeeman Bo T. Palacios are automatic delegates to the National Convention.

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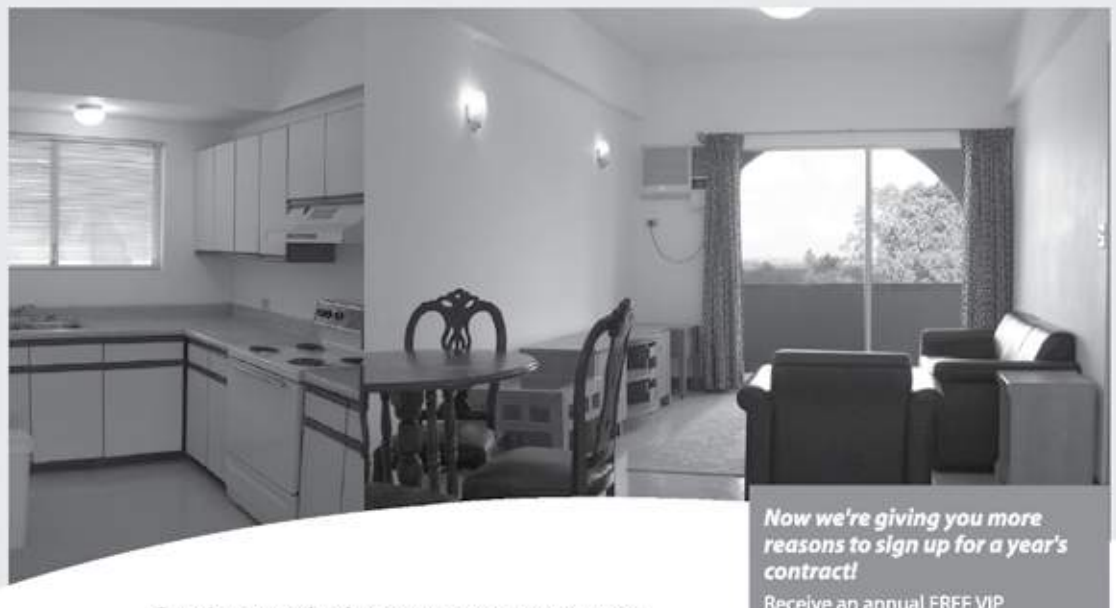

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'Govt's contribution rate cut applied ahead of law'

By AGNES E. DONATO
agnes_donato@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Fitial administration started implementing the 18-percent retirement contribution rate before the rate reduction became a law, it was learned on Friday.

The Public School System said that last pay period, Finance Secretary Eloy Inos instructed his staff to reduce the employer share of retirement payments for PSS from 24 percent to 18 percent and failed to pay the employer share of insurance premiums.

Blanco-Maratita

Borja

Boardof Education chairperson Lucia Blanco-Maratita and Education Commissioner David M. Borja said that the Finance Department's action was illegal, as Public Law 14-98 protected PSS from any rate increase on the employer share of retirement contributions for five years.

"If the governor had signed into law Senate Bill 15-102, which establishes this new rate for the entire CNMI government, we would understand the employer share of retirement benefit change. However, this bill has not yet been signed into law, according to SAPLR. Therefore, the $53,377 withheld from the retirement contribution and the $13,181 withheld from the employer share of insurance for the PSS is a violation of P.L. 14-98," the education officials told the Legislature.

The Finance Department's decision affected the pay period ending Jan. 5, 2008. Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's approved the 18-percent contribution rate last Thursday, Jan. 24, 2008.

Before that, a 36.7-percent retirement contribution rate had applied to all government agencies, except PSS. A 24-percent rate had applied to PSS pursuant to Public Law 14-98.

Blanco-Maratita and Borja explained their concern, saying that failure to remit the employer share of insurance would result in suspension of benefits to 973 locally funded employees.

"A suspension of health benefits to the 973 employees and their families in these difficult economic times may result in a denial of medical services and prescription drugs vital to the health of the employees, their spouses and their children. The failure to remit the full amount of the employer's share of retirement will also have an adverse impact on our employees," they said.

Voices of the Marianas presents 'Play Buffet'

The theater group Voices of the Marianas is coming back with a new show in March 2008.

This year's piece is called "The Play Buffet: A Little Something Everyone's Taste." It is a follow-up to "In Transit: Stuck in an Airport," which played to sold out audiences last year.

Like its precursor, the new play is a variety of original stories. "Some are taken from people's real lives, some from their imagination," said producer and director Barbara Sher.

The performance is scheduled for the first two weekends in March and will be at the American Memorial Park's Visitors Center. Tickets will cost $5 each.

Sher invites people to volunteer and be part of the production. "Although much of the play is set, we are still open for new pieces, actors and crew," she said. Those interested may email Sher at barbara.sher@gmail.com.

"In Transit," the first production by the Voices of the Marianas, was an original piece written by the actors. It took place at the airport where the passengers—all from a variety of cultures—were stuck because of a typhoon warning. To pass the time, the characters told stories of their experience in the islands.

"We were hoping, during rehearsals, that we would get, at least, our friends to come see our show", recalled Sher, "so we were surprised and delighted to have sold out performances every night and standing ovations." ***(Agnes E. Donato)***

Managaha gets a green flag

The Division of Environmental Quality analyzed water samples collected from Managaha's recreational beaches and dock this week as part of routine sampling. None of the samples collected contained excessive concentrations of fecal indicator bacteria nor did they exceed the CNMI Marine Water Quality Standards. Therefore, DEQ assigns all of the sampled beach sites a green flag. Enjoy our waters.

The division analyzed a total of 11 samples from the shore surrounding Managaha this week. DEQ welcomes all inquiries as to the quality of the beach water. The public is encouraged to contact DEQ at 664-8500 with any questions concerning this matter. ***(DEQ)***

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Nursing board increases fees for services

From Page 1

Under the new fee scale, an APRN initial license costs $140 and interim permit is $90. License renewal costs $80, while a late renewal costs $100. An APRN license reinstatement is $140 and endorsement is $80.

A graduate nurse may obtain an interim permit for $60. Certified nurse technicians are charged $45 for an initial license, $45 for endorsement, $30 for renewal, $35 late fee, and $40 for reinstatement.

For certified nursing assistants, the fees are: $30 for an initial license, $30 for endorsement, $20 for renewal, $25 late fee, and $30 reinstatement.

The regulations also increased fees collected from registered nurses and licensed practical or vocational nurses.

For registered nurses, services such as initial license, examination, or re-examination, which used to cost $80, are now $110. The regulation also increased the cost for an RN endorsement from $60 to $90, RN renewal from $20 to $50, RN late renewal from $30 to $60, and RN reinstatement from $40 to $70.

Licensed practical or vocational nurses must also bear $30 hikes in their initial license, examination, and re-examination fees, each of which used to cost $60. An LPN endorsement fee also increased from $40 to $70; renewal fee from $15 to $45; late fee from $25 to $55, and reinstatement fee from $30 to $60.

Other services that saw increases are license verification, from $10 to $40, and issuance of temporary license, from $10 to $50.

The rate hikes took effect on Jan. 11, 2008, and will remain in effect for 120 days only, as the regulations were adopted on emergency regulations.

In order to make the regulations permanent, the Board of Nurse Examiners must go through the regular promulgation process and subject the regulations to a public comment period of at least 30 days.

The board listed several reasons it decided to adopt the regulations on an emergency basis. The board said that it lacks the resources to subsidize its licensure activities, and that the fees have not been updated since 1982.

The board also explained that it must mail the year's renewal notices by the end of January, needs to print those notices in advance of the mailing, and needs to tells the licensed professionals how much to pay to continue and renew licensure. Following the standard process for promulgating rules and regulations would delay the date of setting the new fees until February or March.

"It would be administratively unworkable to delay the notification of new fee levels to the licensees, or notify them of the old fees, and then mail to them again with a notice of increased fees. Further, such as two-step process would waste extremely limited resources and lead to confusion," the board said.

CHECKING OUT THE SIGHTS JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Tourists point at the big waves crashing on Banzai Cliff in Marpi yesterday.

Local college loses its academic dean

From Page 1

In an interview with Wyatt, he said, "I offered my resignation two months ago but the president [Dr. Carmen Fernandez] said no. But I thought it's about time I moved on so I resigned. Everything I needed to do, I've done."

Wyatt had been with NMC for ten and a half years. During that time, he served two years as academic dean and seven months as the acting president before Fernandez came in.

Wyatt said that when he submitted his letter of resignation to Fernandez over a week ago, "apparently, she took it well. She didn't say anything."

He said he is currently looking for a new job.

"I have excellent experience, so it shouldn't be too hard," Wyatt said.

He added that "in order to find a good job, you have to approach it like you are working. But I got a lot of leave. I've got the time and the ability to find a new job."

When told of his resignation, Dr. Gary Ramsey at the NMC Nursing Department said, "Oh, that's too bad. He's a really great guy."

NMC declined to comment on Wyatt's resignation. Fernandez was not available for comments as she was on Tinian as of this writing.

Debra Cabrera is expected to be NMC's acting academic dean.

'Tip of the spear' for US defense

From Page 1

Although the island is typhoon-plagued and earthquake-prone, cursed with bad traffic, unable to cope with its own garbage and overrun with invasive tree snakes that have eaten nearly all the birds, the Guamanians aren't just blowing smoke.

The Pentagon has chosen Guam, a quirkily American place that marries the beauty of Bali with the banality of Kmart, as the prime location in the western Pacific for projecting U.S. military muscle.

Guam has served as an important U.S. military outpost since World War II. But now the sultry tropical island, about three times the size of the District of Columbia and with a population of 173,000, is set to become a rapid-response platform for problems ranging from pirates to terrorists to tsunamis, as well as a highly visible reminder to China that the United States is nearby and watching.

To that end, U.S. Marines by the thousands and U.S. tax dollars by the billions ($13 billion at last count) are to be dispatched to Guam over the next six years, along with a major-league military kit that includes Trident submarines, a ballistic missile task force, Navy Special Operations forces and Air Force F-22 fighter jets. Nuclear-powered attack submarines and B-2 stealth bombers have already arrived, and preparations are being made to accommodate aircraft carriers.

The peacetime invasion, due to continue into 2014, will balloon the island's population by about 40,000 service people, contract workers and dependents, an increase of almost 25 percent. Real estate prices have jumped, and outside investors are descending on the island. A Chamber of Commerce poll found widespread popular support for the move.

"We can't help but boom," said Jeff Pleadwell, who owns Jeff's Pirates Cove, a beach hamburger joint, and expects his business to prosper. "But the island is going to change radically. Everyone is scared—of how the Marines will behave. We also worry that life inside the base will be first-world, while outside the fence it is going to be third-world."

All in all, the Marine move is giving many Guamanians—an extraordinarily patriotic people who fight and die in U.S. wars at rates much higher than on the mainland—a serious case of the jitters.

"We are proud to be the tip of the spear, but the federal government needs to assist us to make sure that the quality of life outside the military fence line is better, not worse, after the Marines come," said Michael Cruz, lieutenant governor of Guam, a colonel in the Guam Army National Guard who has served in Iraq and a point man in local planning for the Marine move.

Whether or not that assistance materializes, the plan is proceeding. The Marines are moving here from Okinawa, Japan, where their six-decade presence has sometimes outraged the local people. The Japanese government, as part of a unique joint security deal with the United States, is footing $6.1 billion of the cost for housing the Marines on Guam.

The U.S. federal government already owns about a third of the island, and military planners here say they may buy or lease still more so Marines can train with rifles, mortars and heavy machine guns.

The newcomers will be mostly young, mostly single men trained as warriors—and periodically looking for a big night out on a small island where most hotels and restaurants cater to the sushi-and-kimchi predilections of upper-middle-class Japanese and South Korean tourists.

"The military wants to have a pool party, but they are telling us to build the pool," said James Espaldon, a Guam senator who oversees the island's infrastructure.

Even before the Marines were coming, the debt-ridden government here struggled—and in many cases failed—to maintain roads, water lines, schools and a balanced budget. The island's landfill is bursting at the seams with garbage and is in violation of federal environmental laws.

It doesn't help that the island sits in an area of the Pacific known as Typhoon Alley and is regularly pummeled by storms that flatten nearly everything not made of reinforced concrete. Guam is also near a major geologic fault and has been hit by major earthquakes, most recently in 2001.

The newcomers could bring on an infrastructure breakdown unless the federal government comes up with "significant funding," the U.S. Government Accountability Office said in a study published in September.

Guam's government says it needs $2 billion to $3 billion in federal funds to cover outside-the-fence costs of the military move. The Pentagon, with its patronage and lobbying links to the key members of Congress who dole out money, can be fairly sure it will get its $13 billion for the inside-the-fence part of the buildup, but the Guam government is assured of nothing.

The Defense Department is neither authorized nor obligated to compensate Guam for the whole of the long-term impact of the Marines' presence on the island, according to retired Marine Maj. Gen. David Bice, executive director of the Joint Guam Program Office, which is managing the Pentagon's move.

Bice said, though, that the Pentagon recognizes that Guam's needs are real and extensive: "The federal government is recognizing that this has to be a move that is good for the people of Guam."

Several federal agencies have created a Guam task force and have held two meetings in Washington to try to find money for the island. But like the District of Columbia, Guam has no votes in Congress. And unlike the District, which sits where power and the news media sit, Guam is halfway around the world.

"Most people think we are in Central America," said retired Army Col. Dennis J. Santo Tomas, an adviser to Guam on homeland security matters.

Military planners in Washington, speaking on condition of anonymity, predicted that Guam would have trouble securing the money it will need for coping with the military buildup.

Here on the island, elected officials are expressing growing concern. "Look, no jurisdiction in the States would tolerate such a big buildup in such a short time," said Cruz, the lieutenant governor. "This growth has to be balanced—inside the fence and outside."

Guam does have an ace up its sleeve when it comes to paying for the cost of the newcomers. Under federal law, income taxes paid by all residents on the island—including those serving in the military—must remain on Guam. Instead of going to the U.S. Treasury, they flow into the island's general operating fund.

Tax revenue from 40,000 new residents would be a substantial windfall, perhaps as much as $200 million (the island's current tax revenue is about $500 million). But the new money will not arrive until well after the taxpayers do—and well after Guam will have to start improving its port and roads and expanding its schools.

Nearly everyone planning for the Marines' arrival worries about this Catch-22. But so far, there are no solid plans for bridge loans or bonds to solve it, said Bertha Duenas, Guam's acting budget director.

There is another major local worry: How will those young Marines pass their off-duty hours?

On Okinawa, three U.S. servicemen—a sailor and two Marines—were convicted in 1996 of kidnapping and raping a 12-year-old Japanese girl. The crime triggered months of anti-military protests on Okinawa. "What happened there is not at all lost on us," Cruz said.

To lessen chances of conflicts with local people, the Guam government has asked the military to hold special courses in "how to behave" before the Marines arrive and to periodically conduct refresher courses.

In Washington, Bice, who is directing the move to Guam, bristled at the suggestion, saying that he "challenged anyone to find a more disciplined, more goal-oriented group of young people" than Marines. "There will be cultural awareness training for individuals who arrive on Guam," he said, "just as there is training anyplace we assign military men and women."

Congress asked for stimulus rebates for NMI

As the House of Representatives prepares to pass an economic stimulus package next week, Resident Representative Pete A. Tenorio has teamed up with representatives from the other territories to get the benefits outlined for taxpayers in the 50 states to be extended to the taxpayers of the territories.

In the agreement announced by the White House, House Minority Leader John Boehner, and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, individual taxpayers would get up to $600 in rebates, working couples $1,200 and those with children an additional $300 per child. The rebates would phase out gradually for single taxpayers whose adjusted gross incomes exceeds $75,000 and for couples with incomes over $150,000.

In letters to congressional leaders Tenorio wrote, "The tax rebates and child credit proposed in the agreement reached yesterday by the President and House leadership would be very beneficial not only to each family in the CNMI, but also to stimulate our economy as well."

He further requested that any rebates and credits available to CNMI residents be payable by the U.S. Treasury, and that anything else would be extremely harmful to the local economy and the already insufficient budget of the local government.

"I have been looking for ways in which the federal government can assist the people of the CNMI in these tough economic times. These rebates will certainly be helpful," explained Tenorio.

The House is expected to pass the legislation next week and the U.S. Senate is contemplating additional measures for the legislation. They are considering extending unemployment benefits, and raising food stamp benefits.

"I will closely monitor all congressional actions on this stimulus package. It is important that not only does Congress help us out, but that they do it in a manner that will not hurt our government," said Tenorio. ***(PR)***

Excite.com pauses for a photo during their filming of the Saipan Marathon. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Japan media outlets cover Saipan Marathon

Japan media outlets arrived in an abundance to cover the Saipan Marathon. Those participating included Body+ Magazine, Excite.com Japan and Yomiuri TV.

Body+ Magazine will be featuring the CNMI from the angle of sports as well as beauty and fashion. The Saipan Marathon will be a feature event in April that will also showcase spas, hotels and local foods on Saipan. Body+ has a monthly circulation of 70,000 with a readership of males and females in their 20's and 30's.

Excite.com Japan is an Internet portal and was once one of the most recognized brands on the Internet. Excite offers a variety of services including web-based mail, instant messaging, stock quotes and a customized homepage. The content is collated from over 100 different sources. Sponsoring the Saipan Marathon was one of Excites' 10th anniversary projects. Excite.com enjoys 4,000,000 hits per day. The Saipan Marathon can be found in the International Employment Genre on Excite.com.

Yomiuri TV brought Kanpei Hazama, a famous comedian and runner in Japan, to Saipan for the marathon. Yomiuri TV is broadcast in 678,713 households across Japan. Their targeted market segment is Male and Female viewers in the 20-50 year old age group. Their coverage of the Saipan Marathon will air at the end of April.

"We are most appreciative of the support of the Japan media for the Saipan Marathon," said MVA managing director Perry Tenorio. "Continued exposure in Japan will keep us at the forefront of the minds of Japanese travelers as they make travel decisions." ***(MVA)***

SBA Hawaii sets regional lending conference

HONOLULU—The Hawaii District Office of the U.S. Small Business Administration will conduct the first Hawaii Pacific Lending Conference on March 27 and 28, 2008, at the Honolulu Country Club in Honolulu, Hawaii. This important conference will cover the latest economic overviews for Hawaii, the region and the nation, small business banking trends, SBA loan programs and industry updates.

"With the attention of the business and financial community intensely focused on the economy and the subprime crisis, this conference is really timely. It's a challenging, yet exciting time for the small businesses that we serve," said Andrew Poepoe, Hawaii District Director. "We've developed this conference to help more lenders learn about opportunities in our area. We're encouraging participation from lending institutions and service providers from Hawaii, the Mainland, and the Pacific region such as Guam, Saipan and American Samoa."

The conference is designed for small business lenders, lending service providers, certified development companies, and small business assistance providers and economic development specialists to increase their knowledge of financing tools and trends as well as their effectiveness in penetrating the small business market in the Hawaii Pacific region.

Presented by SBA and SCORE, the conference will commence at 8:30am on Thursday, March 27 and will feature prominent executives and industry experts in general session and as the luncheon keynote. Smaller workshops will be offered the participants for the more in-depth, specific topics.

The half-day schedule on Friday, March 28, starts at 7:30am with breakfast and continues with more market and industry information in general sessions.

For more information or registration forms, go to http://www.sba.gov/hi or contact Karen Sakihama at hawaiigeneral@sba.gov or (808) 541-2990, ext. 209. ***(PRNewswire)***

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
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PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC §8113, the Civil Service Commission hereby gives notice that the Board will meet on January 29, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. The meeting will be held at the Civil Service Commission Conference Room, 1211 Capitol Hill Road, Capitol Hill, Saipan. The agenda for the meeting is as follows:

AGENDA

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call**
3. **Seating of new Commission Members**
4. **Election of Officers**
5. **Adoption of Minutes**
6. **Executive Directors Report**
7. **Legal Counsel Report**
   a. P.L. No. 15-43 Boards and Commissions Reform Act of 2006
   b. Cases to be scheduled for hearing
8. **Old Business**
   a. Adoption of amendments to Personnel Service Rules and Regulations
9. **New Business**
   a. House Bill No. 15-122
   b. Renumbering of Personnel Service System Rules and Regulations
   c. P.L. No. 15-119
9. **Announcements**
10. **Adjourn**

Felix R. Fitial, Member Daniel H. Nielsen, Member Tina I. Kukkun, Member

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XVIII, Issue No. 27

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EDITORIAL

A stimulating plan

There are two challenges in designing a fiscal stimulus. The first is to figure out if one is necessary. Despite the violent swings in stock prices of the past three days, the actual economic data are still ambiguous as to whether the U.S. economy is already in a recession, about to enter one or, as the Congressional Budget Office forecast Wednesday, likely to skate by with slow growth. The need for stimulus is ultimately a political judgment rather than a technical one. For better or worse, both Republicans and Democrats have concluded this election year that stimulus there must be.

Which leads to the second challenge: devising measures that put cash in the hands of those who will spend it quickly, and to enact these measures before a recession has already ended, without blowing up the long-term budget deficit. The record of past stimulus efforts, most of which arrived too late, is not encouraging, and the partisan divide in Washington gave little reason to hope that policymaking would be much more precise this time. The pact announced Thursday by President Bush and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., is, in that sense, a pleasant surprise. Their negotiations swiftly arrived at a set of tax rebates that would, if promptly enacted, channel hundreds of dollars to individual low—and middle-income consumers. They also agreed on some business investment incentives that are less likely than the rebates to have a stimulative effect but are less damaging, in terms of the deficit, than other tax cuts the White House might have demanded.

To be sure, this was a compromise. Many in the Democratic coalition, especially labor unions, wish Pelosi had secured an extension in unemployment benefits and an increase in food stamps. Either action would have been a worthy step that could have quickly helped the most cash-strapped Americans. But both would have been deal-breakers for the White House. Critics of Thursday's deal overlook how far Pelosi did move the Bush administration: The president gave up extending the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts; he agreed to supply $28 billion of the proposed tax relief to lower-income individuals and households that were not included in his own proposal; and he accepted an income cap to prevent the richest Americans from getting a handout. This is what economists call a "second-best solution." But, as stimulus packages go, it's defensible.

It will take some heroics by the Internal Revenue Service to get any tax rebate checks out by June—assuming a bill passes the Senate soon. Several Senate Democrats have said they plan to tinker with the Bush-Pelosi deal, trying to add not only unemployment insurance and food stamps but also public works spending and aid to state governments. Senators should do what they can to improve the proposal that is now on the table. But they'll have to move fast, and they'll have to remember not to make the perfect the enemy of the good.

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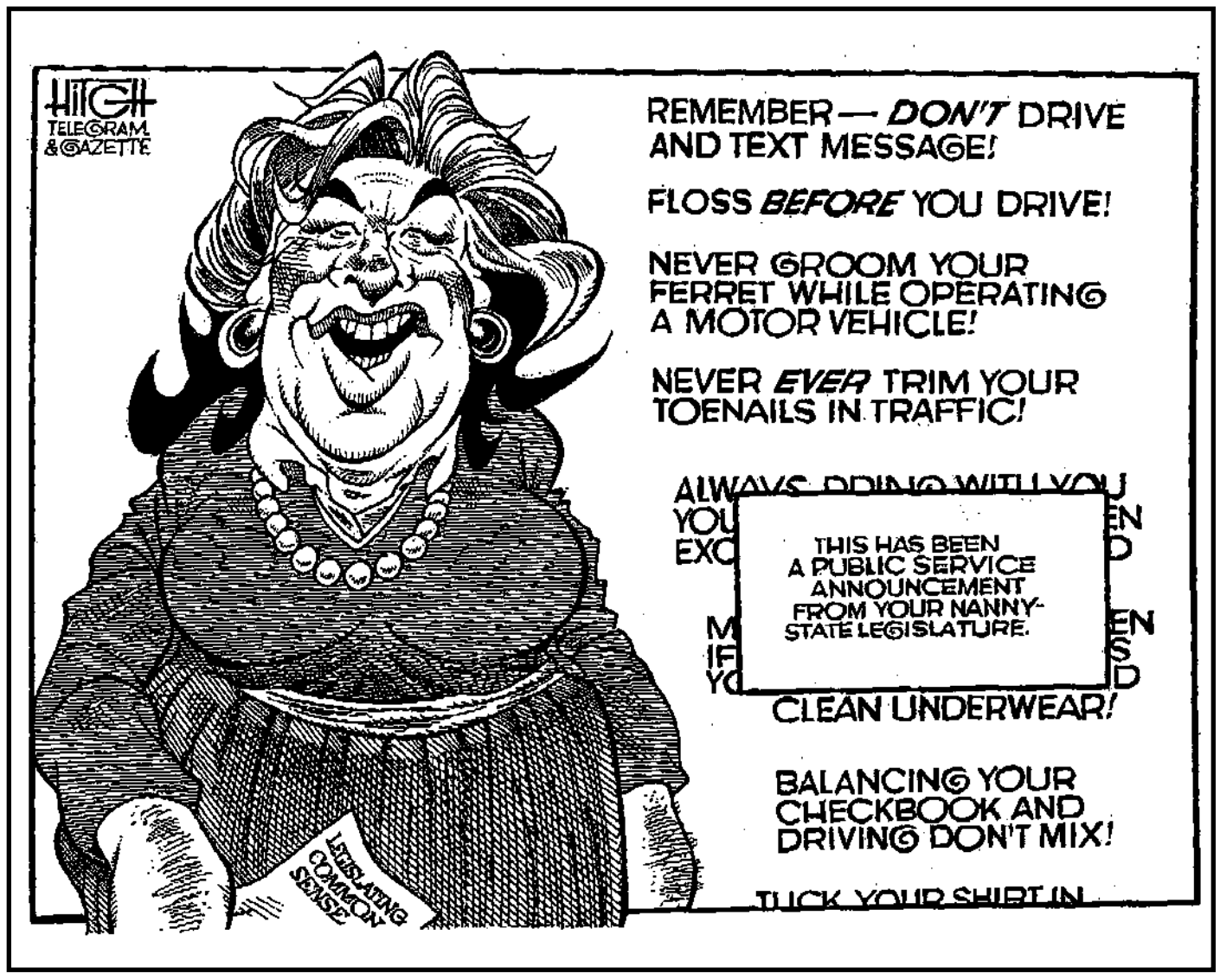
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Chess' pride and sorrow

By TIM RUTTEN
(c) 2008, Los Angeles Times

Rutten is a Times *columnist.*

Bobby Fischer, who died a melancholy exile's death last week at age 64, was that most perplexing of human characters—a protean genius and a repellent man. He was to American chess what Ezra Pound was to American poetry.

Nearly four decades ago, in the summer of 1972, Fischer was something more—a participant in what then seemed to be the ultimate contest between American individualism and Soviet collectivism. When he went to Reykjavik, Iceland, to play Russian grandmaster Boris Spassky for the world championship, the 29-year-old Fischer was everything an American hero was supposed to be: the son of a hardworking single mother, a self-made grandmaster who had taught himself the game from the instructions that came with a chess set purchased in the candy store downstairs from his Brooklyn apartment.

Spassky was a quintessential representative of the vast Soviet chess establishment, which included institutes devoted to the study of the game and that treated its successful players as national heroes. He arrived in Iceland as the reigning world champion, accompanied by physical therapists, chefs, a tennis partner and dozens of coaches and grandmasters to help him analyze Fischer's every move.

The notoriously eccentric Fischer—whose antipathy toward the Soviets was storied—skipped the opening ceremony and had to be coaxed back into playing at all by a phone call from Henry Kissinger, who appealed to his patriotism. Fischer lost the first two games, then went on to crush Spassky in a match that ushered in a new global enthusiasm for chess.

It was a high-water mark for both Fischer and the illusion that sports could somehow become a nonviolent venue into which the competition between the world's political systems could be channeled. Shortly afterward, Palestinian terrorists kidnapped and killed Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics, and that illusion was dead forever.

Fischer gave up his title without ever defending it. Most of his remaining years were given over to crank religiosity and paranoid bigotry. Despite the fact that his mother and, probably, his biological father were Jews, Fischer became a Holocaust denier and an ever more virulent anti-Semite. He lived for many years in a series of increasingly shabby Pasadena, Calif., apartments and hotel rooms near his church's headquarters. In 1981, he was arrested there because he matched a bank robber's description and refused to give police his name.

In 1992, Fischer became a fugitive from U.S. justice when he violated the embargo against Serbia to play his only post-Reykjavik match—a shabby rematch with the has-been Spassky. On the run, he made more viciously anti-Semitic and anti-American radio broadcasts, ended up under arrest in Japan and finally was granted citizenship and refuge back in Iceland, where he died.

In his great meditation on genius, Yeats wrote: The intellect of man is forced to choose / Perfection of the life, or of the work.

Putting aside the question of whether the mad ever really act of their own accord, let's assume for one moment that Fischer chose perfection of his work, and let us consider him accordingly.

The British grandmaster Raymond Keene said Friday that Fischer "was the pride and sorrow of chess. It's tragic that such a great man descended into madness and anti-Semitism." Yet even within that unquestionable greatness, there is a strange, sad solitude.

Most great chess players have an encyclopedic knowledge of their sport's historic matches. Over the years, several of the accomplished players who worked with Fischer expressed surprise that he had a precise memory only of the matches he'd played himself. His 1969 book is considered one of the true classics in the vast literature of chess. Its title? "My 60 Memorable Games."

Fischer's contributions to chess theory are original and numerous. Oddly, though, those remarkable innovations almost all involve openings. Though he was a player so consumed with winning that his disdain for even a strategic draw was legendary, only a single endgame bears Fischer's name.

Although his sixth game against Spassky in 1972 has been compared to a Mozart symphony, many analysts believe that his greatest game was in 1956, when the then-13-year-old prodigy defeated Donald Byrne, a leading U.S. chess player, with a breathtakingly audacious queen sacrifice.

Fischer would go on to sacrifice nearly everything that makes life—however imperfect—worth living: family, friends, faith, country, a decent regard for other people and, finally, reason itself. Idiosyncrasy became eccentricity, and eccentricity became ordinary madness. In the end, as the darkness gathered, there was no one left around him willing or able to strike a consoling light.

When you willfully set the board like that, the outcome seems preordained. The 20th century's great anti-heroic bard, Samuel Beckett, wrote Bobby Fischer's epitaph:

"There is no endgame between a man and his fate."

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A drunk driver is my Super Bowl highlight

By WOODY WOODBURN
Special to the Los Angeles Times

Woodburn is a writer living in Ventura, Calif.

Superstar cyclist Lance Armstrong's world was turned upside down on Oct. 2, 1996, the day he was diagnosed with cancer. Now a survivor, he celebrates that date as the moment his life changed unexpectedly for the better.

I have my own 10/2—as, I believe, do most of us—on 1/26. That was the date of Super Bowl XXXVII in San Diego in 2003, which I covered as a sports columnist for the Torrance Daily Breeze in Southern California. A few hours after the Tampa Bay Buccaneers turned the Oakland Raiders into twisted wreckage, 48-21, an uninsured drunk driver did the same to my Honda Accord.

Police estimated that he was flying at 65 mph on a downtown street before ramming my car as I waited to make a right-hand turn. The impact was so violent that the driver's seat was ripped off its bolts. When my wife called the towing company, she was offered condolences; the worker couldn't believe I hadn't been killed.

"You're a very lucky man," one of the police officers told me after he finished documenting the accident scene.

Lucky, indeed. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 17,602 people were killed in alcohol-related accidents in 2006, about the same number as in 2003. Last year's figures are sure to be tragically high.

Still, luck is relative. I suffered a ruptured disk in my neck and underwent a two-hour operation called an "anterior cervical discectomy and fusion five-six with iliac graft." Translation: The neurosurgeon sliced my neck open from the front, delicately removed the damaged disk between my fifth and sixth vertebrae without damaging the spinal cord, used a power saw to cut a wedge of bone from my pelvis and then shoe-horned this slice of bone between the two vertebrae to enable them to fuse.

The surgery left a 3-inch scar running across my Adam's apple that allows me to honestly tell people who ask about it, "Oh, it's from an old Super Bowl injury." Unfortunately, I had nerve damage that proved irreversible. Now, five years later, my left thumb and fingers remain numb and slightly uncoordinated. I found that hunching over a keyboard in a cramped press box was torture after about an hour.

All the same, I look back on 1/26 as a blessing.

For starters, it forced me to leave a job I loved too much to leave on my own. Sportswriting had me away from home too many nights a week, almost every weekend and most holidays. Yes, I miss the press box, but in return I have not missed so much more. My wife and I recently celebrated our silver wedding anniversary on the correct date, not the nearest night with no game. Instead of covering the Lakers or Dodgers, I attended every performance of two plays my daughter wrote in high school. I have not missed a single one of my son's high school cross-country or track meets. I wouldn't trade the Super Bowl, Final Four and Olympics for that.

Sports is still part of my life. I write for magazines and am working on a book that includes words of wisdom from athletes I have interviewed over the years. Olympic track champion Jackie Joyner-Kersee, for instance, who shared, "When you have hard times or low moments, that just makes the good times more valuable and special." And University of California, Los Angeles basketball coach John Wooden's adage, "Make each day your masterpiece." And of course, Armstrong, who told me: "My philosophy is to never waste another day thinking about tomorrow or next week or next year. Cancer taught me that today is all I have. I want to live today like there is no tomorrow."

I didn't fully appreciate these insights before having my life spun around by a drunk driver.

Sure, there are times when my fingers feel like they are on fire and I fall into self-pity. I sometimes curse the drunk driver who rear-ended me because my neck aches all the time. I had to "retire" from playing men's rec-center basketball and give up tennis. Still, I was lucky. I completed a marathon run (3 hours, 18 minutes) two years after the accident, and I didn't have to do it in the wheelchair division.

As much as I lost because of a drunk driver, at least it wasn't my life. As much as I lost, I have gained much more—such as the perspective that Lance Armstrong's 10/2 and my 1/26 and so many people's 9/11 should make each of us realize that our days are numbered.

Nation's problems solved, Congress can now focus on steroids

By STEVEN P. GROSSMAN
Special to The Baltimore Sun

Grossman is the Dean Julius Isaacson professor at the University of Baltimore School of Law. His e-mail is sgrossman@ubalt.edu.

Having successfully extricated us from the president's disastrous war in Iraq and with the economy humming along seamlessly, Congress was finally able to turn its attention last week to what really matters in America: whether baseball players are telling the truth about using steroids. Apparently, our legislators are feeling especially sanctimonious these days because with a week left to go, no member of Congress has been indicted this month.

We heard from former Sen. George J. Mitchell, baseball commissioner Bud Selig and union leader Donald Fehr breathtakingly revealing testimony about the widespread use of steroids in baseball and how—yes, perhaps—someone should have noticed what was going on.

As illuminating as this testimony was, I can't help but express my concern that we have to wait another month before we hear from Roger Clemens, his accuser, Brian McNamee, and others apparently part of the grand conspiracy to bring down our national pastime. (Hey, Andy Pettitte—was it just two shots, or three? Inquiring congressional minds want and need to know.)

We have to live through another month without the benefit of really, really knowing who lied—a conclusion we can draw reliably only after hearing commentators analyze the looks on the faces of the witnesses as they testify under oath.

Wisely, our elected representatives have realized that a problem as fundamental to our national existence and identity as the threat posed by juicers in baseball cannot possibly be handled by only one branch of the federal government. So we hear now that upon the recommendation of a House committee, the FBI has launched its own investigation into whether Miguel Tejada lied to a congressional staffer about whether he knew Rafael Palmeiro and others were using steroids.

Thank goodness that with domestic terrorism no longer a worry, the FBI can be brought into this crusade as well. While I am pleased that law enforcement is on top of this, I do worry about Tejada still roaming free.

I have a complaint, though. These important investigations have not gone far enough. Our legislators and others have screamed about how our great American game has been tarnished by cheating, so let's get to the bottom of it.

Some of you as old as I am may remember Gaylord Perry, a great pitcher for the San Francisco Giants and Cleveland Indians, among other teams. Perry won more than 300 games and was elected to the Hall of Fame. But everyone knew he did it primarily by throwing spitters, which was then, and still is, illegal in baseball.

I charge Mitchell with speaking to former players and trainers who spoke with other players and trainers who saw Perry doctor the balls. I charge Congress with bringing those witnesses and Perry before it to find out who is lying.

And after that? On to bowling!

Bad environment for these deals

By ERICA ROSENBERG
SPECIAL TO THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

There's nothing wrong with a group of people historically at odds sitting down to find common ground. Or is there?

For decades, our public lands have been a battleground: Timber, wildlife, recreation, wilderness—which interests and uses should dominate? But now, "collaboration" is all the rage. In collaboration, diverse stakeholders (as they invariably tag themselves)—environmentalists, developers, off-roaders, timber companies, county officials—hash out an agreement on how to manage their local public lands and then submit it to Congress for approval.

A few deals already have been enacted, and another half-dozen are in the works. Collaboration has been touted as the solution to "gridlock" on our national forests. Timber companies and their allies gripe that the normal process—extensive analysis, citizen involvement and the right to challenge agency decisions—has ground all "management activity" (read: logging) to a halt. Western counties surrounded by public land argue that they need room to expand. Others believe lands worthy of protection are still threatened. The new paradigm means everyone sits down with their adversaries.

But these collaborations are troublesome, particularly for environmentalists, who risk undermining their mission as well as the very laws that are the basis of their power, effectiveness and legitimacy.

For example, a bill poised for introduction in Congress would turn into law an agreement reached by one collaborative group on how to manage Montana's 3.3-million-acre Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. The stakeholders—Montana Wilderness Association, National Wildlife Federation, Trout Unlimited and timber companies—had one thing in common: They hated the management plan proposed by the Forest Service. So they came up with their own plan specifying which areas can be logged, which can be opened to off-roaders and which should be recommended to Congress for wilderness designation.

Sounds reasonable enough. So what's wrong? To start, as owners of the public lands, all Americans have a stake in their management, and they have not designated these representatives. Even the most inclusive collaboration can go bad: Outliers who pose a threat to consensus are either not invited or made to feel unwelcome. And ultimately, decisions are being made behind closed doors. But Congress loves a done deal. With a local sponsor, Congress is inclined to rubber-stamp these initiatives, overlooking that they are an end-run around the suite of laws that safeguard public lands and keep land-management decisions an open process.

The Beaverhead bill, for example, triples the acreage where logging can take place from what was in the Forest Service's plan. It requires an environmental analysis only for individual logging projects rather than the plan as a whole, thereby waiving the bedrock U.S. environmental law, the National Environmental Policy Act. It also allows logging in roadless areas—a radical departure from the Roadless Area Conservation Rule that environmentalists championed during the Clinton era. Other deals have sold off vast acreage of public lands in exchange for wilderness designations.

The collaboration prototype—the 1998 Quincy Library Group legislation—illustrates the problem. That group, named for the California town library where it met, came up with a plan for three national forests in the Sierra affected by endangered-species listings. The proposal increased logging while protecting pristine areas. When it landed in Congress, California Rep. George Miller insisted on adding one provision: All environmental laws would apply. That meant the Quincy Library logging plan had to go through the same environmental analysis a Forest Service plan would.

The Quincy Library proposal, held up at the time as a model of local, consensus-based decision-making, has never been fully implemented. Why? Primarily because it didn't jibe with Endangered Species Act guidelines protecting the California spotted owl. In other words, it did not pass scientific or legal muster.

That environmentalist "stakeholders" signed on to the Quincy Library agreement in the first place highlights the danger of the collaboration fad. After years of being tarred as obstructionist ideologues, some environmental groups now have a seat at the negotiating table—indeed, are seen as crucial to legitimizing any deal. Enjoying their newfound popularity, these self-appointed decision-makers become heavily invested in reaching an accord, regardless of the science, the law or the long-term effect on the land.

For decades, environmentalists fought to get a more level playing field and establish transparency and accountability in public-lands policy; they continue to fight the Bush administration's relentless efforts to dismantle these policies. How ironic it would be, then, if in their eagerness to embrace the new paradigm, they craft and push through Congress deals that undercut the very laws that got them to the table in the first place.

Rosenberg directs the program on public policy at Arizona State University's law school and served as counsel to the House Resources Committee from 1999-2004.

Sattelite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲84° ▼75°	▲84° ▼74°	▲84° ▼75°	▲85° ▼75°	▲85° ▼74°

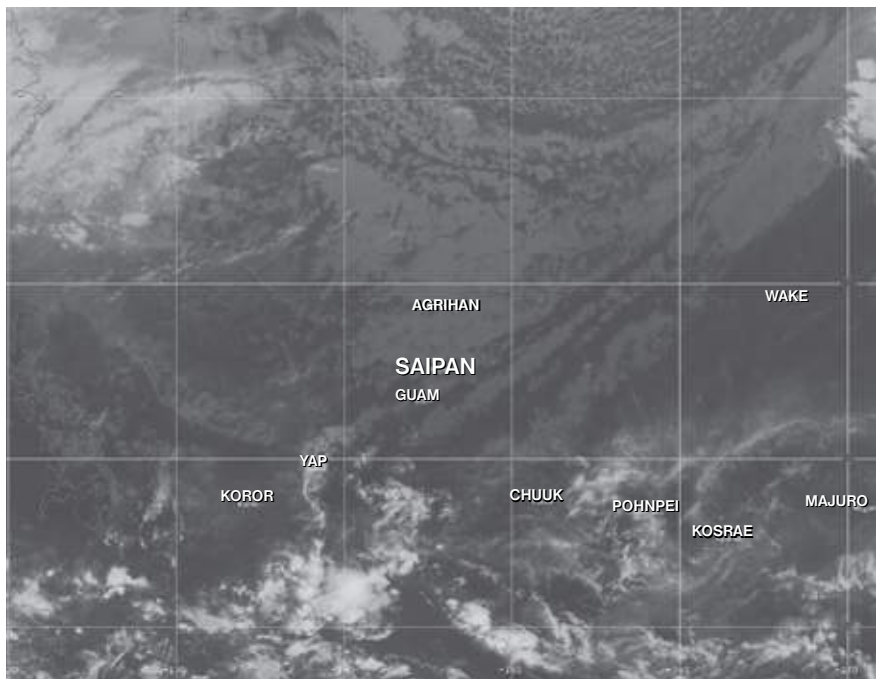
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Partly Sunny	▲88	▼77
Palau	Mostly Sunny	▲89	▼77
Yap	Sunny	▲89	▼77
Chuuk	Sunny	▲90	▼79
Pohnpei	Mostly Sunny	▲85	▼76
Kosrae	Sunny	▲88	▼76
Majuro	Partly Sunny	▲84	▼76

Around The Globe

Auckland	Mostly Cloudy	▲74	▼64
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	▲34	▼21
Hong Kong	Cloudy	▲66	▼60
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲79	▼68
London	Partly Sunny	▲54	▼41
Los Angeles	Rain	▲60	▼48
Manila	Cloudy	▲85	▼73
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	▲81	▼59
Miami	Cloudy	▲78	▼56
New York	Partly Sunny	▲40	▼27
Osaka	Cloudy	▲41	▼30
Paris	Cloudy	▲11	▼ 3
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲47	▼31
Rome	Mostly Sunny	▲60	▼39
Salem	Cloudy	▲43	▼31
San Francisco	Cloudy	▲55	▼44
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	▲33	▼15
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	▲45	▼33
Washington, DC	Partly Sunny	▲44	▼28

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, SATURDAY, JAN. 26, 2008
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends southwestward from 25N167E to 19N156E then continues as a shear line to 11N145E to 11N134E to 13N130E and farther northwest. Extensive low-level cloudiness and scattered showers are found in the modified polar air north of this boundary to 25N and beyond. Convergence associated with a weak surface trough from the equator at 143E to 5N143E is generating scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms well south of Yap and Palau south of a line from the equator at 132E to 5N137E to 5N144E to 1N149E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

4:44AM Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet
11:11AM Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
5:42PM Today	Low Tide:	0.7 Feet
10:55PM Today	High Tide:	1.5 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:47AM	6:12PM
Monday	6:47AM	6:13PM
Tuesday	6:47AM	6:13PM
Wednesday	6:47AM	6:14PM
Thursday	6:46AM	6:14PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	10:20PM	10:23AM*
Monday	11:08PM	10:59AM*
Tuesday	11:56PM	11:36AM*
Wednesday	11:56PM**	11:36AM
Thursday	12:46AM	12:16PM

*Following Day **Preceding Day

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- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 12, 2008

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Guam

CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	1,2,4,5,6,7
CO9597	8:30am	9:20am	1,2,5,6
CO9313	8:30am	10:00am	3,4,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	Daily
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	2,3,4,5,6,7

Saipan-Seoul

OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606	3:30pm	7:00pm	2,4,6,7

Saipan-Busan

OZ 608	4:00am	7:35am	1,4,5,7

Guam-Manila

CO 891	6:00am	10:30am	3 via Yap and Koror
CO 893	6:30am	8:05am	6
CO 893	8:25am	10:00am	2
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:45am	1,2,4,6,7

Saipan-Manila

CO 895	4:45pm	6:35pm	6
CO 895	6:45pm	8:35pm	3

Saipan-Nagoya

NW 078	8:30am	11:10am	Daily

Guam-Nagoya

CO 971	7:45am	10:30am	1,2,4,5,6,7
NW 023	4:15pm	7:05pm	Daily
CO 904	4:35pm	7:25pm	Daily

Saipan-Narita

NW 078	8:30am	1:30pm	Daily via Nagoya
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily

Guam-Narita

JO 982	4:15am	7:00am	Daily
CO 961	7:20am	9:55am	Daily
CO 006	1:00pm	3:45pm	Daily
JO 942	3:30pm	6:15pm	Daily
NW 081	3:55pm	6:50pm	Daily
NW 073	4:15pm	7:00pm	Daily
CO 963	4:50pm	7:30pm	Daily

Saipan-Osaka

NW 083	4:30pm	7:25pm	Daily

Saipan-Shanghai

MU 590	4:20am	7:00am	2,6

Guam-Hongkong

CO 910	7:45pm	10:40pm	1,5

Saipan-Guanzhou

CZ 3008	5:00am	8:00am	2,6

Saipan-Rota

CO 9313	8:30am	9:05am	3,4,7

Rota-Guam

CO 9313	9:30am	10:00am	3,4,7

ARRIVALS

Guam-Saipan

CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,4,5,6,7
CO 9316	3:30am	4:20am	2
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9598	10:15am	11:45am	1,2,6 via Rota
CO9600	10:45am	11:35am	3,4,5,7
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	2,3,4,5,6,7

Seoul-Saipan

OZ 605	9:00am	2:30pm	2,4,6,7
OZ 603	7:40pm	10:00am+1	7
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
OZ 607	6:50pm	2:50am+1	3,7 via Busan
OZ 607	7:30pm	2:50am+1	4 via Busan

Busan-Saipan

OZ 607	9:30pm	2:50am+1	3,4,6,7

Manila-Guam

CO 894	11:20am	4:55pm	2
CO 894	7:45pm	1:20am+1	6
CO 892	9:45pm	5:25am+1	3 via Koror
CO 892	9:45pm	6:30am+1	3 via Koror and Yap
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7

Manila-Saipan

CO 890	9:15am	2:55pm	6
CO 890	11:45am	5:35pm	3

Nagoya-Saipan

NW 077	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily

Nagoya-Guam

NW 024	10:00am	2:40pm	Daily
CO 970	11:30am	4:00pm	Daily
CO 905	8:25pm	12:50am+1	1,3,4,5,6,7

Narita-Saipan

NW 076	10:35am	3:05pm	Daily
NW 077	6:15pm	1:10am+1	Daily via Nagoya

Narita-Guam

JO 941	9:30am	2:05pm	Daily
NW 074	9:45am	2:25pm	Daily
CO 962	11:05am	3:35pm	Daily
CO 007	5:15pm	9:50pm	Daily
NW 082	8:30pm	1:15am+1	Daily
CO 964	8:40pm	1:15am+1	Daily
JO 981	9:30pm	2:05am+1	Daily

Osaka-Saipan

NW 084	10:40am	3:10pm	Daily

Shanghai-Saipan

MU 589	8:05am	3:00am+1	1,5

Hongkong-Guam

CO 910	11:40pm	6:20am+1	1,5

Guanzhou-Saipan

CZ 3007	8:00pm	4:00am+1	1,5

Rota-Saipan

CO 9598	11:10am	11:45am	1,2,6

Guam-Rota

CO 9598	10:15am	10:45am	1,2,6

(Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana. ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Schedule of Religious Services

CATHOLIC

Mt. Carmel Cathedral
Sunday Mass: 6am, 9am, 11am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm

Korean Center
Sunday: 10:30am
Wednesday: 10am
Thursday-Friday: 8pm
Saturday: 3pm and 7:30pm

Kristo Rai Parish
Sunday Mass: 6am, 8am and 9:30am
Monday- Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm
Saturday: 6am and 6pm

Nuestra Senora De Soledad Parish
Wednesday Mass: 6pm
First Friday Healing Mass: 6pm
Saturday Mass: 6pm
Sunday Masses: 7:30am & 9am

Saint Jude Parish
Sunday: 6am, 8am, 10am
Wednesday and Thursday: 6pm

San Antonio Parish
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Tuesday and Friday: 6pm

San Francisco de Borja-Rota
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6pm

San Isidro-Rota
Sunday: 5am and 10am
Monday-Wednesday: 7pm
Thursday-Saturday: 5am and 7pm

San Jose (Oleai) Parish
Sunday: 6am and 7:30am
Tuesday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday: 6pm

San Roque Parish
Sunday: 9am
Wednesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10:30am

San Vicente Parish
Sunday: 6am, 9am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6pm

Santa Remedios
Sunday: 7:30am
Tuesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10am-Baptism

Santa Soledad
Sunday: 7:30am

PROTESTANT

Born Again Christian (Upper Room Int'l Ministries), Saipan
Wednesday Prayer and Healing Night: 8-10:30pm
Saturday Tagalog Service: 8-10:30pm
Sunday English Service: 9:30-11am
Sunday School for Children: 10-11am
Sunday Filipino Service: 7-9pm

Calvary Baptist Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 9am
Sunday Morning Worship: 10am
Sunday Evening Worship: 6pm
Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm

Chinese Christian Church of Saipan
Worship Services: Sunday, 10am and 7:30pm
Bible Study: Tuesday-Friday, 9:25pm

Cornerstone Christian Church, Saipan
Worship/Study Opportunities
Adult Sunday School: 9am
Youth Sunday School: 9am
English Worship Service Sunday: 10am
Sunday Service: 5:30pm
Worship/Fellowship Sunday: 9:30pm
Evangelism/Follow-up: Sunday/Monday: 1:30/7:30pm
Worship Team: Monday/Saturday-9pm;
Cell Groups Tuesday: 7:30pm
Mid-week Service: 7:30pm
Prayer Meeting Wednesday: 7:30pm
Leader's Bible Study Friday: 7:30 pm
Cornerstone School of Ministry Saturday: 7:30pm

Episcopal/Anglican Church on Saipan
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Worship Service Sunday: Holy Communion 9:00am
Place: Vicarage, Chalan Laulau,
Call 235-0545 for directions

Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan
Worship Service: 9am
GBI Classes: 4-6pm
Prayer Meeting: Monday-Saturday: 6am
Sunday: 7am
Home Cell Bible Study: Wednesday-Friday: 7pm
Youth Service: Friday: 5:30pm

Iglesia Ni Cristo, Saipan
Thursday: 5:30am (Tagalog); 7:45 pm (English)
Saturday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Sunday: 6:45am (English)
Children Worship Service: Sunday, 9am (English)

Immanuel United Methodist Church Koblerville
Sunday Services
8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal
9:00 AM Family Worship
3:00 PM Choir Rehearsal
Wednesdays at Parsonage
7:00 PM Prayer, Share and Care

Immanuel Methodist Church (Filipino Congregation)
Sunday: 7:00am-Choir Rehearsal
8:00am-Church Service (Tagalog)
9:15am-Sunday School
Wednesday: 8:00pm-Prayer Meeting
Thursday: 7:30pm-Choir Practice (Church)
Saturday: 8:00pm-Choir Practice (Parsonage)

Jesus is Lord Church, Saipan
English Service: 9-11am, Sunday
Tagalog Service: 6-8pm, Sunday

Korean Presbyterian Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 8:20am
Sunday Adult: 10am
Sunday Adult: 11:30am
Sunday Evening: 7:30pm
Wednesday: 8pm

Life in the Son Christian Fellowship, Saipan
Sunday Worship Service: 10am–12noon
Tuesday: Leadership Institute 7pm-10pm
Wednesday: Corporate prayer 7pm-8pm
Last Friday of the month-prayer: 7pm-11pm
Friday: Youth on Fire: 7pm-9pm
Tel. No. 235-LIFE (5433)

Marianas Baptist Church, Saipan
English Worship Service: 9-10:30am
Evening Worship Service: 6-7pm
Children Sunday School: 9-10:30am
Tagalog Sunday School: 11am-12pm
English Sunday School: 11am-12pm
Korean Worship Service: 11am-12pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting:
English, 7pm-8pm
Korean: 8:30pm-9:30pm

Missions Connection Ministry
Every Sunday Celebrations:
10am (English), 6pm (Tagalog)
Wednesday Bible Study: 7pm
Youth Impact Friday: 7pm
Saturday Prayer Meeting: 7pm

Northern Marianas Christian Church
Sunday Worship Service 10am Fina Sisu Housing FS#1 (Child care will be provided)
Friday Services @ 7pm Fina Sisu FS#1 for more info pls. contact Ryan 484-2620

Saipan Bible Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30-10am
Divine Worship: 10am-11:30am
Evening Service: 7pm-8:30pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8pm-9pm

Saipan Christian Church
Sunday: 7:30am-10am
Sunday: 6:30 pm -9pm
Monday: 8 pm -10pm (Prayer Meeting)
Thursday: 8pm-10pm (Cell Groups)

Saipan Church of Christ
Sunday Bible Class: 9am
Sunday Worship: 10am
Sunday Worship English: 6pm
Sunday Worship Tagalog: 7pm
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:30pm

Saipan Community Church
(Sunday Services)
Palau Service: 7:30am-9am
English Service: 10am-11:30am
Chuukese Service: 1pm-2:30pm
Filipino Service: 5:00pm-7:00pm

Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Saipan
(Saturday Church Services)
Sabbath School Program: 9-10am
Lesson Study: 10-10:40am
Divine Service: 11-12pm
Visitation: 3-4pm
Adventist Youth Program: 4:30-5:30pm
Sundown Worship: 6-7pm

First Baptist Church (Formerly Saipan Baptist Church)
Afetna St., San Antonio
Sunday
9am Sunday school
10am Regular worship
6pm worship
Wednesday
7pm worship
Everyone is warmly welcome to attend our worship services. Transportation is readily available to anyone who needs a ride to our church. For further information, please call Pastor David M. Mclure at 234-1939/235-7779.

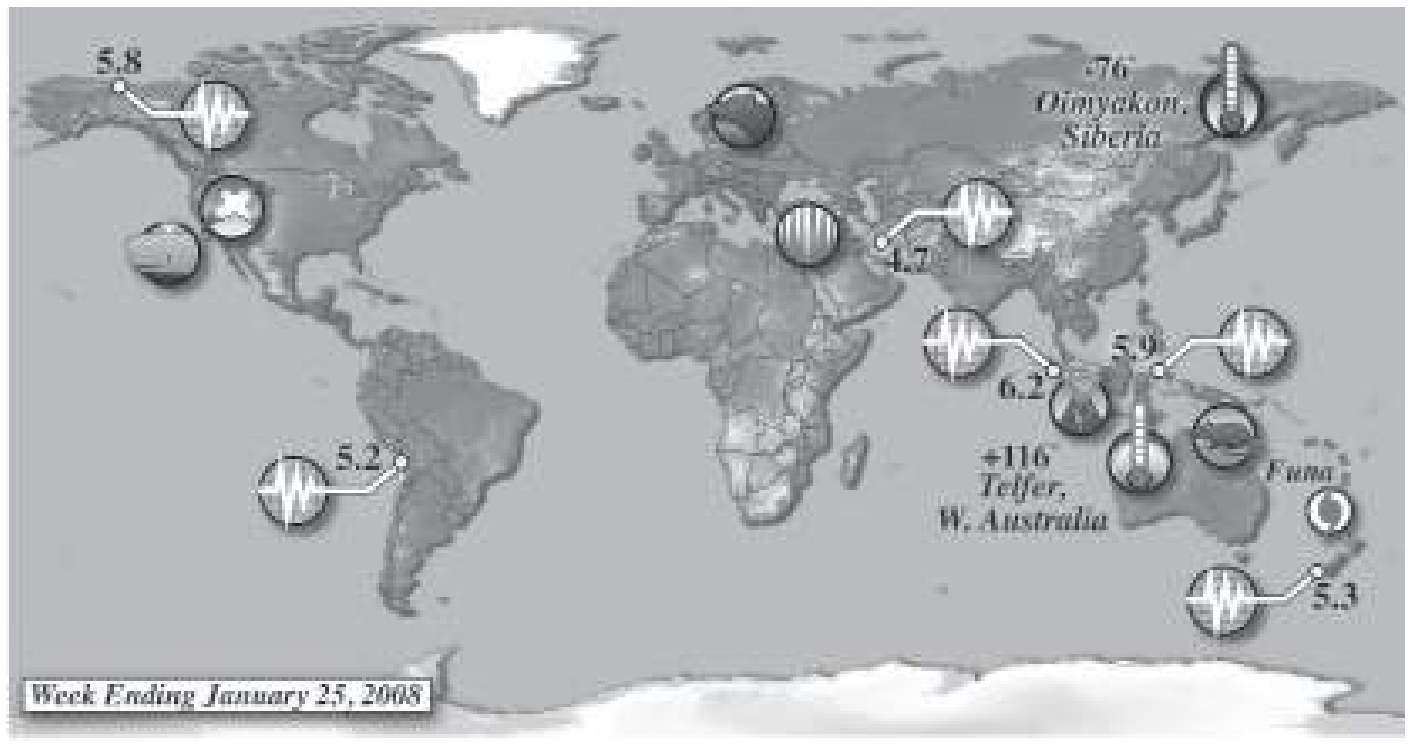
Thy Word Ministries Saipan Faith Center
Phone 234-0209
New Christian Charismatic Church Service located in Chalan Paio, Beach Road in the Sablan building on the 2nd floor above Subway Sandwiches.
Senior Pastors: George & Gail Kamakahi
Asst. Pastors: Eric & Penny Sakaguchi
Service Times
Sunday 10:00am Worship Service
Sunday 7pm Discipleship Classes
Tuesday 10:00am Bible Studies
Tuesday 6:00pm Intercessory Prayer
Tuesday 7:00pm Music Practice
Wednesday 7:00pm Mid-Week Service
Saturday 10:00am Evangelism

Upper Room International Ministries
Sunday 5:30am-6:30am
Morning prayer
7am-9am English service
7am-9am Sunday school
10am-12noon
English service, Koblerville
Wednesday 7pm-9pm Prayer meeting
Saturday 7pm-9pm Tagalog service
Venue: Jason Presbyterian Church
Gualo Rai, Saipan

Victory Chapel Christian Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30am
Sunday AM Worship:10:30am
Sunday PM Worship:7:00am
Wed Worship: 7:30pm
Prayer 45 min. Prior to Service Times
Morning Prayer: 6-8am M-S

Earthweek: A Diary of the Planet

By STEVE NEWMAN



Wild Bird Tragedy

A disease introduced into the wild during the 1940s from U.S. domestic poultry has killed 15,000 birds around Utah's Great Salt Lake over the past month, some literally falling dead from the sky. The U.S. Geological Survey's National Wildlife Health Center said the birds were killed by avian cholera, which caused some birds to try to land a foot or higher above the water, fly upside down or swim in circles when they eventually hit the lake. The disease is caused by the bacterium *Pasteurella multocida*, currently the most prevalent infectious pathogen among North American waterfowl. While it doesn't affect humans, wildlife officials warn that people shouldn't pick up the birds or let their pets chew on them. Tom Aldrich, of Utah's division of wildlife resources, said the disease flourishes in cold weather, and last November was the coldest on record.

Whales Lose Protection

President George W. Bush sidestepped two federal environmental protection laws by signing a waiver that could allow the U.S. Navy to use sonar in its anti-submarine warfare training off the California coast. The exemption drew outrage from environmentalists who believe the use of high-powered underwater sound could harm whales and dolphins. A number of studies have shown that sonar can cause marine mammals to suffer decompression sickness, bleeding and fatal beachings. California Attorney General Jerry Brown urged a federal judge to nullify Bush's waver. "It's hard to find words to express the extent to which this deviates from the American tradition of separation of powers. It's shocking," Brown said.

Rat-Eating Vine

An extremely rare plant that can eat small rats was found in an isolated area of Australia's Cape York Peninsula, according to a report by the Australian Broadcasting Corp. It says James Cook University botanist Charles Clarke and a colleague found the species at an undisclosed swamp location near the Jardine River. They are keeping the exact location secret to protect what they have dubbed "Tenax" from collectors. The carnivorous plant grows like a vine to about 10 inches in height and mainly eats small insects, ants and an occasional lizard.

Raining 'Fire'

Anak Krakatau (Child of Krakatoa) volcano spewed incandescent rocks as high as 8,000 feet above Indonesia's Sunda Strait, posing a threat to fishermen and tourists sailing near the volcanic island. The Antara news agency reports that eyewitnesses said the eruption produced a deafening sound and sent large amounts of smoke billowing even higher than the red-hot stones. Vulcanologists warned those rocks were as hot as 2,700 degrees Fahrenheit and could have killed anyone struck by them. Anak Krakatau has produced swarms of increased activity in recent weeks.

Earthquakes

Shaking from a 6.2 magnitude temblor off Sumatra caused a ceiling to collapse, killing an 11-year-old boy on Nias Island. Other structures sustained minor damage.

■ Earth movements were also felt in Indonesia's Maluku Islands, New Zealand's South Island, central Iran, northern Chile and northern parts of the Yukon Territory.

South Pacific Cyclone

High winds from the remnants of Cyclone Funa downed power lines in northern New Zealand's Hawke's Bay region. Large waves generated by the storm injured five passengers on a cruise ship sailing between New Zealand and Vanuatu.

Middle East Chill

The most bitter cold front to blow over the eastern Mediterranean since 1964 plunged much of the Middle East into a deep freeze. The chill destroyed fruits and vegetables from the Jordan Valley to Syria. In normally temperate Egypt, temperatures hovering just above freezing left residents shivering in homes designed for scorching summers.

Early Awakenings

Unseasonable warmth and dampness across Finland during much of January appear to have convinced some brown bears to leave hibernation. Several of the animals have been seen crossing roads, mainly in the southeast of the country, and ursine movements have also been detected through radio monitoring of bears fitted with tags. Ilpo Kojola, a research scientist at the Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute, said the active bears had probably "not built their winter quarters" properly. Kojola added that a bear would not usually leave its den in winter unless its bedding became saturated by rainfall. The season's first blizzard, predicted for late in the week by Finnish meteorologists, could force the early risers to find another dry and warm place to resume their winter slumbers.

Distributed by: Universal Press Syndicate
www.earthweek.com
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OFFBEAT BRIEFS

Rocket at museum found to be live

CUMBERLAND, Md. (AP)—A rocket on display for two years at veterans' museum was discovered to be live Wednesday and was removed safely, authorities said. The Allegany County's Combined County Criminal Investigations unit and the State Fire Marshal's Office said the ordnance was on display at the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 172 on North Liberty Street. The ordnance was a 48-inch by 2.75-inch Mark 1 Rocket similar to those used on helicopter gun ships during the Vietnam conflict, Deputy State Fire Marshal Joseph Zurolo Jr. said. The rocket was donated to the museum at the chapter building by a local Vietnam veteran about two years ago, he said. On Wednesday, Allegany County law enforcers were notified that the rocket might be live. Bomb squad officers from the fire marshal's office and the FBI went to the museum, examined the rocket and found it was live. Technicians removed the rocket and rendered it safe. Authorities are investigating how the local man came to possess the live ordnance.

Thieves crash car with cow in back seat

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Thieves in Malaysia stole an adult cow, squeezed it into the back seat of a car and drove off with it, but abandoned the animal when the getaway vehicle crashed into a tree, police said Thursday. The cow, injured in the crash, was slaughtered by villagers. The thieves managed to push the cow into the back of a mid-sized sedan Tuesday night, but were spotted by villagers who gave chase, said a local police official in the northern state of Kedah. He declined to be named, citing protocol. The driver lost control during the chase and drove into a tree, injuring the cow, he said. By the time villagers got to the crash site, one person was seen running from the car, but police believe more people were involved in the theft, the official said. It was not clear how they managed to push the cow into the car or whether the animal had been sedated. A blurry photograph in the New Straits Times daily showed the cow's head with closed eyes sticking out of the back seat window of the crashed car.

Good Housekeeping

Is this house chic? Tres!

By DAVID A. KEEPS
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

Jerome Dahan, the Paris-born creative force behind the hip denim fashion lines 7 for All Mankind and Citizens of Humanity, approaches his home with the same eye for detail that infused his Hollywood blue jeans with City of Light street style.

His residence is pure Left Bank elan woven with kicked-back Californian charm, a 1927 Santa Monica Mediterranean that seems fashioned from 1960s French cinema.

Hidden behind a steel gate, the lot is less than a quarter-acre. The two-story house has three bedrooms and 2 1/2 baths. A cabana in the backyard has been transformed into a guest room. The old garage is a laundry room.

"When I saw this house, I fell in love with everything—the proportions, the doors, windows, molding and finishes," Dahan says. "For me it doesn't matter how big it is or whether it is new or old. It has to have character."

Though modest in scale, the house exudes timeless grandeur. Landscape designer Jay Griffith created two entrances.

The first opens from the sidewalk into a space that incorporates a driveway and stepping stones surrounded by tree ferns and philodendron, all leading to an old Moroccan door framed by bougainvillea. A courtyard features all-weather furnishings grouped around a concrete water wall.

The roof is red tile and the exterior is painted mossy gray trimmed in glossy black.

A window-lined galley kitchen defines the south wall, with a kitchen floor that previous owners imported from an Italian monastery. Skylights illuminate marble countertops, white cabinetry and an island surrounded by iron campaign stools.

Off the kitchen, a leather banquette wraps three sides of a table that accommodates eight. Here, under a Moroccan lantern hung from oak beams, Dahan and his fiancée Lela Tillem often drink espressos, field phone calls or enjoy the garden view.

"You feel you are in St. Tropez for the day and don't need to get on a plane," Dahan says.

With potted bamboo and foo dogs

See IS THIS on next page

LOS ANGELES TIMES

In the living room, Jerome Dahan had the two chairs built and covered in a rich stripe reminiscent of Missoni. The pharmacy lamp and Gucci clock on the right sit atop a Ralph Lauren table. The 1960s coffee table is walnut and brass.

LOS ANGELES TIMES

The kitchen floors are covered with stone tiles that previous owners imported from an Italian monastery.

The two-story, three-bedroom house is reflected in the inky pool. The backyard also has a small kitchen for entertaining.

LOS ANGELES TIMES

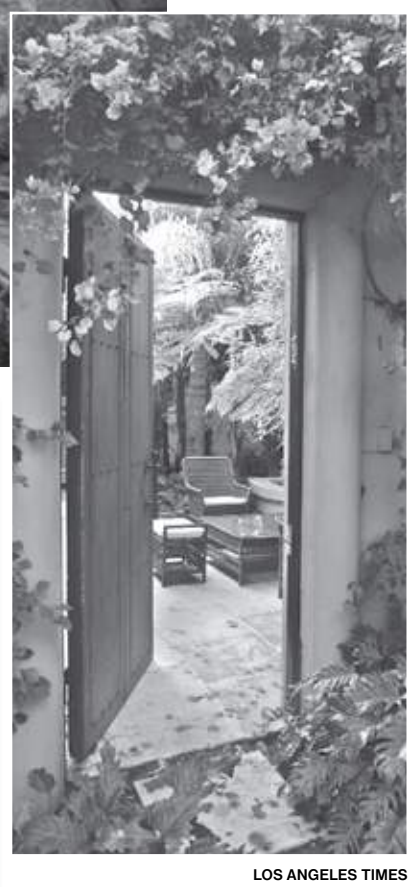
Solutions for decor dilemmas

SANTA MONICA, Calif.—Some of the details in fashion designer Jerome Dahan's house may solve decorating dilemmas of your own.

Among his solutions:

- Bath mat makeover: After retiling the bathroom floors and walls in white marble, Dahan decided that plain white bath mats were too blah. So he laid colorful Hermes beach towels over the mats for non-slip instant color.
- A mix of art: Though he has a special fondness for midcentury French tapestries which he hangs in expensive brass frames, Dahan is equally attracted to paintings found at flea markets and estate sales. "One of my favorite pieces of art is a piece of hand-painted silk that I bought for $10," he says.
- Two-tone palette: In every room Dahan painted, he used two shades of the same color. "It brings life and depth to a room," he says. "When there is a team of colors, it's not as plain."
- Neutral floors: To match the dark hardwood on the ground floor, Dahan and fiancee Lela Tillem selected low-pile espresso carpeting for upstairs. Both floor coverings emphasize the couple's richly colored and patterned Afghan carpets and lighter-tone, solid-color area rugs.

(c) 2008, Los Angeles Times



LOS ANGELES TIMES

The procession from the street to the house includes two entries: an industrial, rusted steel doorway leading to the front part of the yard, and then this old Moroccan door framed by pink and peach bougainvillea. Beyond it lies an inner courtyard with all-weather furniture grouped around a concrete water wall.

Good deals can be knotty but nice

THE WASHINGTON POST/NATIONAL WOOD FLOORING ASSOCIATION

Hand-scraped reclaimed heartpine. You can buy unfinished flooring and hire a skilled craftsman to scrape it for you at your home: "It's labor, labor, labor intensive, but it doesn't have a contrived look to it," says Sprigg Lynn of Universal Floors.

By MARY ELLEN SLAYTER
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—Some people knock on wood; others prefer to walk on it.

Wood floors are available from more than 50 species of trees, both domestic and exotic, in a wide range of colors, hardness and prices.

One way to judge the quality of unfinished hardwood flooring is through the grading system created by the Wood Flooring Manufacturers Association. Its grades are based primarily on color, grain and markings. The best—and most expensive—grades of wood are labeled "clear" and "select."

But these days, not everyone is aiming for perfection. "People are going more toward the natural-looking characteristics of wood," said Sprigg Lynn of Universal Floors in Washington, D.C. "Years ago people wanted very clear. Now they like to see a knot. They like to see a variation, or texture."

Wood flooring can be finished on site or purchased already finished. Pre-finishing generally increases the cost of materials, though it can save on labor because the boards can be put down more quickly and with less mess than a traditional wood floor. However, such flooring is not graded, so you may want to bring home a test carton—not just the retail sample—to make sure you like the way it looks.

"It's better to make a 100-square-foot mistake than a 1,500-square-foot mistake," said Paul Stringer, director of marketing for Somerset, a Kentucky company that sells both types.

Here's a look at what you can get for your money. Prices are per square foot and do not include installation.

THE BARGAIN

If you have a tight budget and you're aiming for a rustic look, consider flooring made of lower-grade, 2 1/4-inch strips of domestic red oak, which is sold unfinished for as little as $1 a square foot by iFloor(ifloor.com). At that price, you get a "cabin" grade wood, with a lot of imperfections and boards of various lengths. You will have to finish it yourself.

THE WASHINGTON POST/NATIONAL WOOD FLOORING ASSOCIATION

White oak planks, with American walnut feature strips. Wood floors are available from more than 50 species of trees, both domestic and exotic, in a wide range of colors, hardness and prices.

THE BASICS

For about $5 a square foot, you can buy the standard choice for U.S. homeowners and builders: high-grade red oak. Half of the market here is domestic red oak, said Anita Howard, a spokeswoman for the National Wood Flooring Association. In this category, Somerset sells 2 1/4-inch oak strips in a natural finish for about $6 per square foot.

THE UPGRADE

A budget of up to $10 per square foot opens up a range of options, including wider planks and exotic or more costly domestic woods, such as American walnut. One option in this price range is Mullican's (www.mullicanflooring.com) three-inch-wide strips of walnut in a natural finish.

THE SPLURGE

Those with the most generous budgets have their pick of the highest grades of exotic and domestic woods, custom designs, and hand-scraped wood for a well-worn historic look. If the latter interests you, consider the planks of hand-scraped walnut in three-, five- or seven-inch planks from Somerset's Hand-scraped Collection (www.somersetfloors.com/handscrapedflooring.asp) for about $20 a square foot.

Or, you can buy unfinished flooring and hire a skilled craftsman to scrape it for you at your home. That will cost you up to $100 a square foot, said Lynn, who still uses tools that his grandfather had in the 1890s to hand-scrape floors. "It's labor, labor, labor intensive, but it doesn't have a contrived look to it."

KITCHEN MAGIC

Citrus Pudding-Cake

A lemon-orange pudding layer topped with its own "soufflé." Spoon it right from the baking dish while it's still steaming hot.

3/4 cup sugar
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 cup milk
3 large eggs, separated
4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) margarine or butter, melted
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
1/4 cup fresh orange juice
2 teaspoons grated orange peel

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease 8-by-8-inch glass baking dish. In large bowl, combine sugar, flour and salt. With wire whisk, beat in milk, egg yolks, melted margarine or butter, lemon juice, orange juice and orange peel.

2. In small bowl, with mixer at high speed, beat egg whites until soft peaks form. Fold one-fourth of whites into orange mixture; gently fold in remaining whites. Pour batter into baking dish.

3. Set baking dish in roasting pan; place on oven rack. Carefully pour boiling water into roasting pan to come halfway up sides of baking dish. Bake 40 minutes or until top is golden and set (dessert will separate into pudding and cake layers). Cool in pan on wire rack 10 minutes, then serve right away.

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Toolkit basics

By SAMANTHA MAZZOTTA
(C) 2008 KING FEATURES SYND., INC.

Q: What makes up the "basic toolkit"? I hear people saying I should have one, but I don't know what I need.—Katie J., Pasadena, Calif.

A: Every toolkit—for homes large and small—should have the items below stocked in it or stored nearby.

- Hammer: a standard 16-ounce claw hammer for your everyday hammering and nail-pulling needs.
- Adjustable wrench
- Pliers
- Tape measure
- Utility knife
- Screwdriver set—including flathead and Phillips-head (pointed, with a cross shape)—in at least two sizes.
- Staple gun (and staples)
- Awl
- Assorted nails and screws, different sizes
- Tape: masking, duct and electrical
- Glue: white, wood and permanent
- Level: a small level will help hang pictures straight.
- Stud finder: to locate support boards behind drywall.
- Scissors
- Small flashlight
- Pencil and scratch paper
- Sandpaper: different sizes and coarseness.
- Hacksaw
- Putty knife
- Lubricating oil (such as 3-in-1 or WD-40)
- Work gloves

There are several other items that will probably, eventually, find their way into your toolkit as the need arises. For example, your first "big" purchase may be a power drill and bit set. Chisels and metal/wood files may soon follow. And of course, should you decide to paint a room, you'll pick up a whole assortment of paintbrushes and related gear. But the above list should get you through those "Shoot, I need to take care of this quickly" moments that every homeowner has.

When upgrading your toolkit, consider each purchase carefully. Will you use it more than once? Is there a better way to do the job? Do you need additional items in order to get the most out of the tool? Once the decision is made, purchase the best tool you can afford.

IS THIS

From Page 10

standing guard, the home's dazzling formal entry beckons with a neoclassical English accent.

Across the threshold, a mirror-topped console is crowned by an autumnal-colored printed canvas by French surrealist painter Jean Lurcat, often credited with reinventing the art of tapestry in the 20th century.

"Most Americans are not into tapestries," says Noam Hanoch, who designs the women's collection for Citizens of Humanity. "There is a richness, warmth and coziness unique to them."

Tapestries give the house a French flavor, Hanoch adds, but the bold graphics, muted colors and intricate designs are also reminiscent of 1960s California modernism.

Dahan found the Santa Monica house in 2003 while setting up Citizens of Humanity.

"This was my very first house, and I was a little overwhelmed," Dahan, 48, says.

Fortunately, previous owners had made additions and upgrades that did not have to be redesigned. Although Dahan and Tillem, 34, met with decorators, "at the end of the day we thought we should do it ourselves," he says.

The guiding principle was simple.

"My whole inspiration is what I remember of midcentury, but keeping it classic," Dahan says.

Although many vintage items have a designer pedigree, other furnishings do not.

In the master bedroom, two dressers with raffia-wrapped handles by T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbings sit next to a Deco tub chair of unknown origin.

A reading nook off the bedroom has a tufted velvet settee bought in Palm Springs and a wall filled with books and gifts. On the top shelf, in a corner, are a pair of Russian painted glass vases.

"Those are two Rose Bowl mistakes," Tillem says. "They looked so beautiful at the flea market that day."

Much of the family entertaining takes place not in the living room but here, poolside, thanks to the small field kitchen and a built-in daybed for lounging.

"I love the living room, and I don't think we spend enough time there," Dahan says. "If you are going to entertain people, it feels a bit formal."

The living room best encapsulates the owner's decor sensibilities. For Dahan, this means a tasteful melange of fine wood furniture, metal accessories and richly textured and finely tailored fabrics.

Throughout the room, ashtrays from Hermes and Cartier share table space with crystal match holders.

"I don't smoke anymore," Dahan says, "but I still collect them because they are so beautiful."

The Good Life

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Mohammed Malek, 18, rests in his apartment provided by Loma Linda University after doctors at the medical center performed surgery to shorten and strengthen the remains of his legs. He lost his limbs in a mine blast in Kabul when he was 15.

For Afghan blast victim, working to walk again a team pursuit

By DAVID KELLY
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

When Mohammed Malek left home to collect firewood, his mother warned him never to stray from the road.

He promised he wouldn't.

But as the 15-year-old wandered through Kabul, Afghanistan, he spied some dried brush, ideal kindling, in a field.

He gingerly stepped off the road and headed for it. There was an explosion, then another.

A few months later, Foreign Service officer Mark Ward was visiting a hospital in the Afghan capital when he noticed a bright-eyed teen, the victim of a mine blast, in the corner.

The young man strapped on a pair of prosthetic legs and began staggering across the room.

With every step, the jagged remnants of Malek's femurs cut into his skin.

"He was red and sweating, and tears were coming down his face," Ward recalled. "We all yelled, 'Stop it, stop it!' He was in agony but utterly determined to show us he could walk."

As a top administrator with the U.S. Agency for International Development, Ward had witnessed tragedy on an epic scale. Yet this one life affected him in a profound way, he said, perhaps because of what he saw represented in it.

"Malek epitomized Afghanistan. Imagine a country losing both of its legs through 25 years of war but determined to go forward," Ward said. "Here was a kid with every reason to give up, but he didn't give up. That was all I needed to see."

Instead of walking past, Ward got involved. He worked on getting Malek into a U.S. hospital, eventually persuading Southern California's Loma Linda University Medical Center to accept him.

On Nov. 3, three years after he stepped onto the minefield, Malek arrived in Loma Linda. He will undergo surgery to repair urological injuries as well as extensive scarring from burns on his chest and arms. Ultimately, he will get modern prosthetics and the chance to walk again.

"There are a lot of people who need help in Afghanistan," said Jerry Daly, assistant vice president for global outreach at Loma Linda, which runs a hospital in Kabul. "Whenever you take an international charity patient, you try to choose cases where you are reasonably sure of the outcome. We think we can really help him."

No one is more certain of success than Malek. Now 18, he has an incandescent smile and sunny disposition that seem to defy the serious health challenges he faces.

"I played (soccer) in Afghanistan, and when I get new legs, I will play again," Malek said through an interpreter.

His legs were ripped off near the hips, and he travels by wheelchair or sometimes walks on his hands. Lumpy bits of shrapnel jut under his skin like pebbles.

Malek starts each morning with a swim and then eats in the medical center cafeteria. His afternoons are spent in his small university-provided apartment, where the Dari-speaking teen learns English from a tutor and through computer programs. Given the slightest opening, he'll blast visitors with a litany of vocabulary and even a few sentences.

"Dog, chair, clock, tree, telephone, shoes, pen," he declares triumphantly. "Teeth, lab, nurse, arm, leg."

Growing increasingly animated, he says, "I am from Afghanistan. What country are you from?"

His chaperon, translator and roommate is Mohammed Ayoub, a towering former mujahid who fought against Soviet troops when they invaded Afghanistan in 1979. Ayoub is Loma Linda University's county director in Afghanistan, where he usually lives.

He is quiet but unfailingly hospitable, brewing mint tea and serving plates of dried fruit and nuts whenever guests visit.

Yet both realize that Malek is not a tourist; he's a patient and the stakes are high.

Two weeks ago doctors performed their first surgery on him, smoothing his jagged femurs, then wrapping the ends in cushions of muscle, fat and skin to help them eventually withstand artificial legs.

Malek's usual composure cracked on a doctor's visit when he was having his dressings changed.

He lay on the table rocking back and forth. His body jerked violently whenever he was touched. Tears rolled down his cheeks.

"He's having reactive nerve pain now," said Dr. Christopher Jobe, chairman of Loma Linda's Department of Orthopedic Surgery, who performed the operation. "It feels like an electrical shock. But I expect him to do well. He's a tough kid."

Malek spoke to Ayoub.

"He feels the leg as it was just before the explosion," Ayoub said. "He is reliving that moment again."

But by the time he left the office, Malek was smiling again.

Aside from Ayoub, Malek's only other reminder of home is the small mosque he attends in neighboring Redlands. On a recent rainy Friday, a line of Muslims inside the mosque bowed toward Mecca. Malek couldn't prostrate himself because he had no legs to bend, so he bowed his head repeatedly.

Abdul Ghaniezadeh, a fellow Afghan, remarked, "There are thousands of people in Afghanistan who are suffering, and Malek won the lottery."

Perhaps, but the man who helped him win it wanted to be sure.

Ward, who had seen Malek just once since the meeting at the Kabul hospital, flew in from Washington, D.C., in December for a surprise visit.

"You remember me, don't you?" Ward asked as Ayoub translated.

Malek nodded vigorously.

"Do you remember walking across that floor? You made it all the way across the room."

Malek's grin faded for a moment.

"There was too much pain when I walked before," he said.

The pair chatted about life in America. Malek praised the balmy weather, the doctors and the friends who spent weekends showing him around. Pressed, his only negative comment was about pizza, which he said he did not like.

Ward asked him about the day he was wounded.

"My mother told me not to go off the road, but I had to because that's where the best brush was. It was in a field near the airport," he said, as Ayoub translated. "When the first mine exploded, it lifted me up and I came down. My leg was in little pieces. I staggered a bit and another mine went off. Then I started going into shock."

The mines were left from the Soviet occupation, Ayoub said.

Afghan soldiers rushed to Malek's aid.

"They held out a rag for me to hold onto while they pulled me off the minefield," he said. "They took me by car to a hospital run by the Italians."

Malek smiled and lifted his shirt, revealing ugly burns on his chest and arms.

Ward grimaced. "In my line of work you have to be an optimist. You learn to find hope in very small things because that's all you can find," he said. "Seeing Malek get across the room that day showed his determination, and that is why he is here today."

Ward turned to him.

"Do you know why you are here?" he asked.

Malek thought a moment.

"Thank you," he said in English, hoping he had struck upon the right response. "Thank you very much."

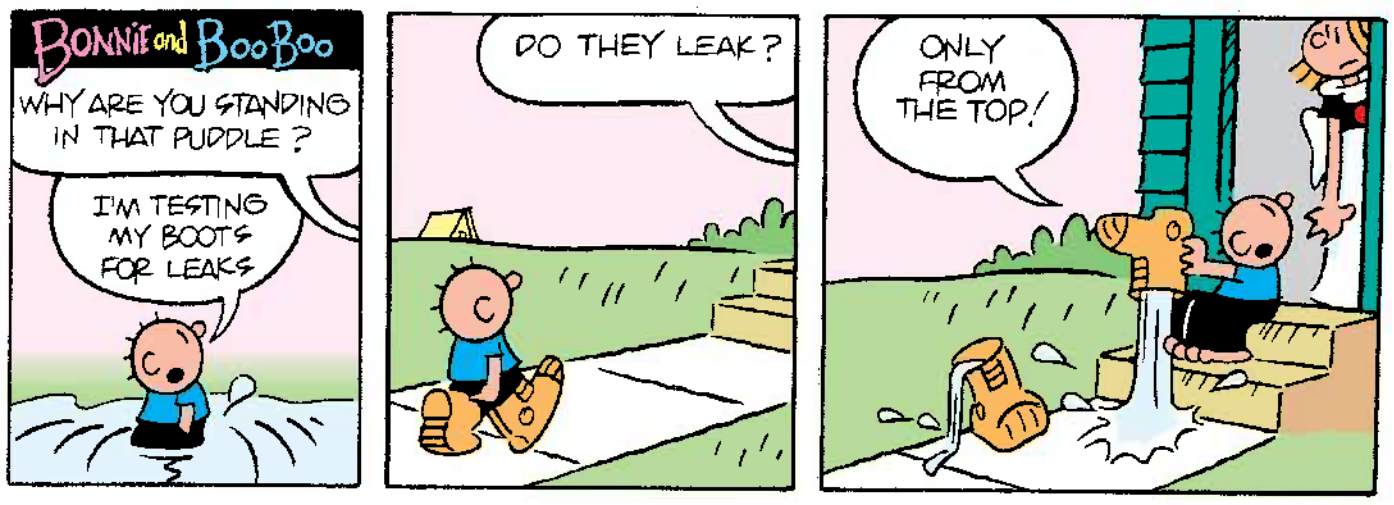
Ward shook his head.

"If you want to know who to thank, don't thank me," he said. "You are the reason you are here today. Thank yourself."

LOS ANGELES TIMES

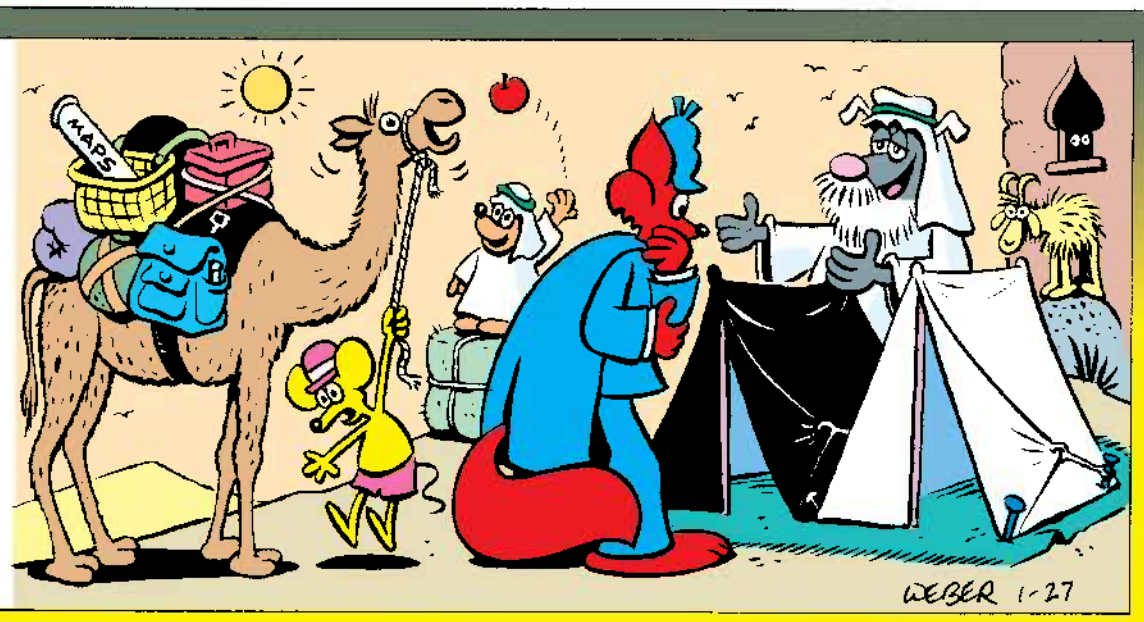
Mohammed Malek winces as orthopedic technician Roy Capriulo checks his incisions. Two weeks ago, doctors smoothed his jagged femurs, then wrapped the ends in cushions of muscle, fat and skin to help them eventually withstand artificial legs.

Bob Weber Jr.'s Slylock Fox and Comics for Kids

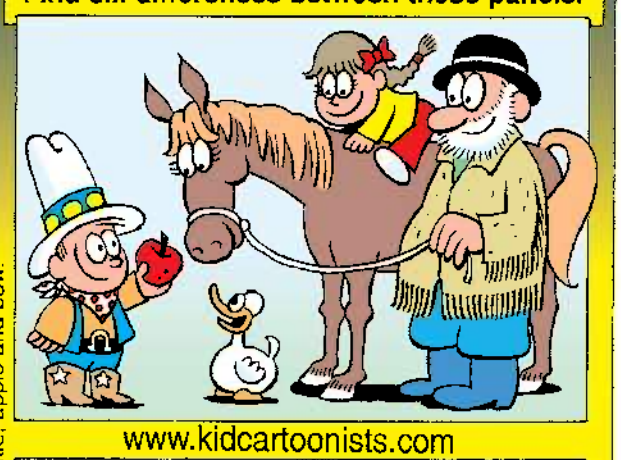


Slylock Fox and Max Mouse are preparing for a journey into the Sahara Desert. Slylock plans to avoid moving in the extreme heat by traveling at night and sleeping during the afternoon sun. Which of these two tents will Slylock choose?

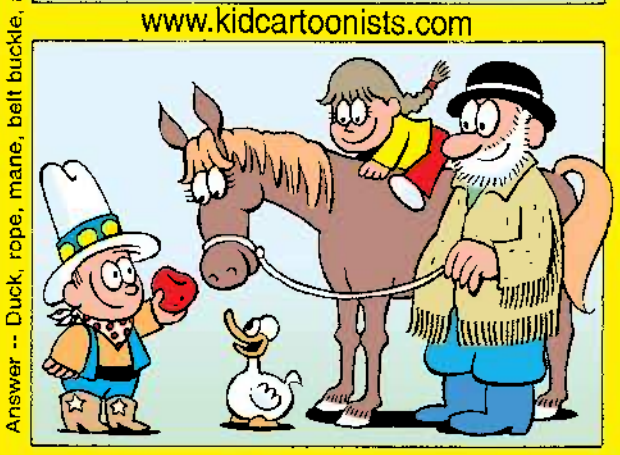
Solution -- Slylock will choose the white tent. The black tent absorbs much more light than the white tent and turns the light energy into heat. The white tent will be cooler.



Find six differences between these panels.



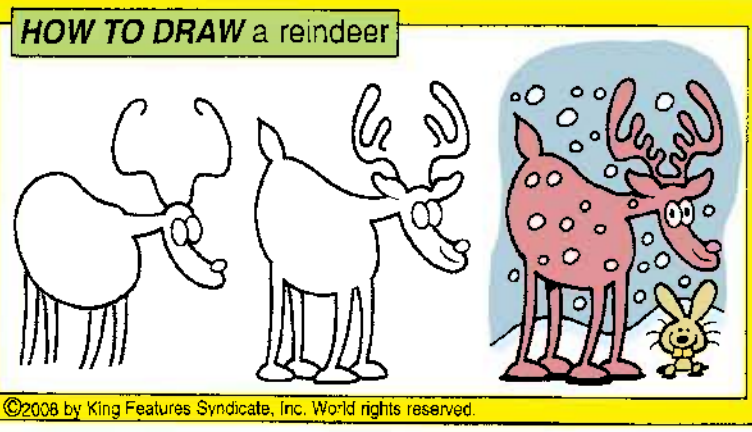
www.kidcartoonists.com



Answer -- Duck, rope, mane, belt buckle, apple and bow.

New! The fourth ***Find the six differences*** collection is here. Semd $4 (check/money order in U.S. funds made payable to King Features) with your name and address to **Six Differences No. 4**, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475

HOW TO DRAW a reindeer



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YOUR DRAWING

Our featured artist is Anna Simms, age 10, of Tampa, FL

You can submit your art and see many more wonderful and creative kid drawings online at **www.kidcartoonists.com**

The place on earth with the highest average temperature is in ...

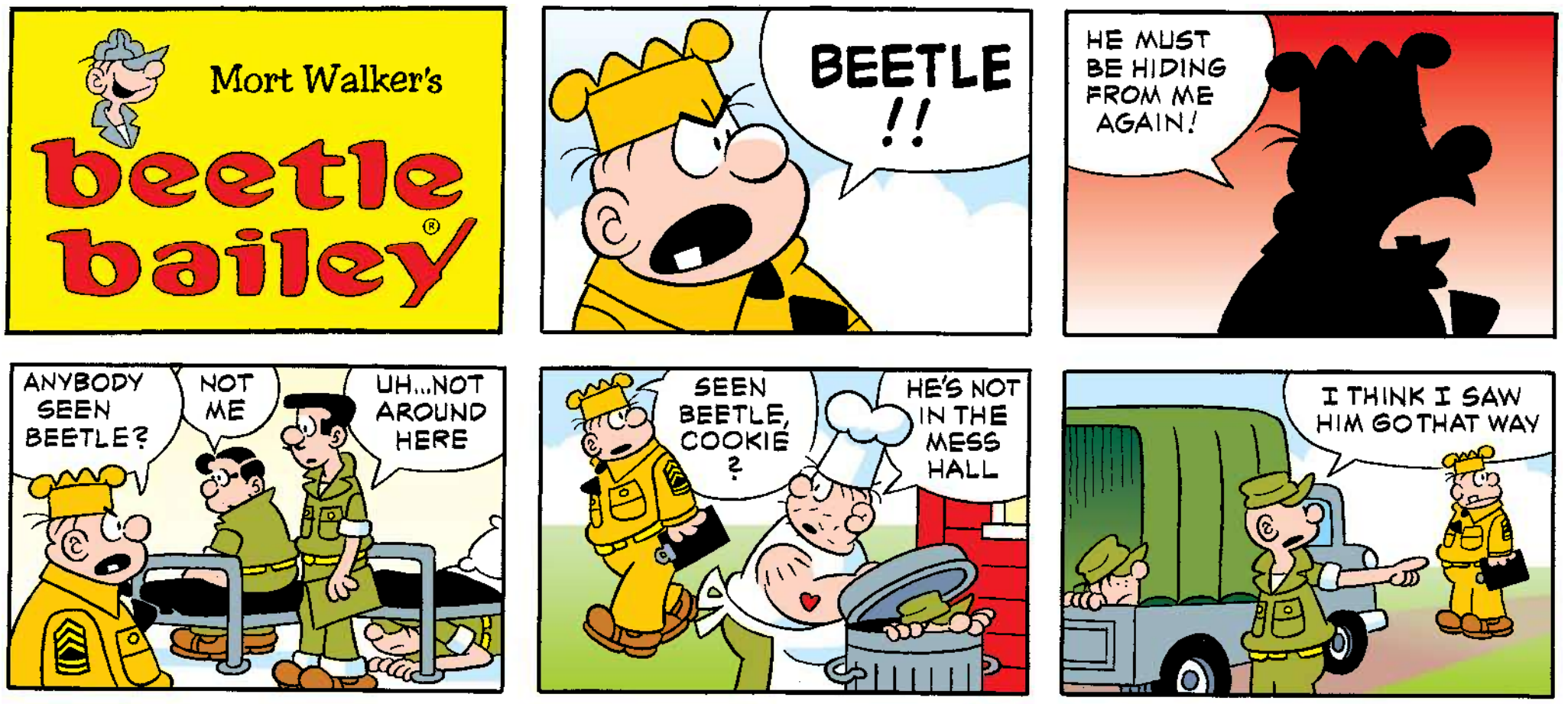
a) India
b) Egypt
c) Ethiopia

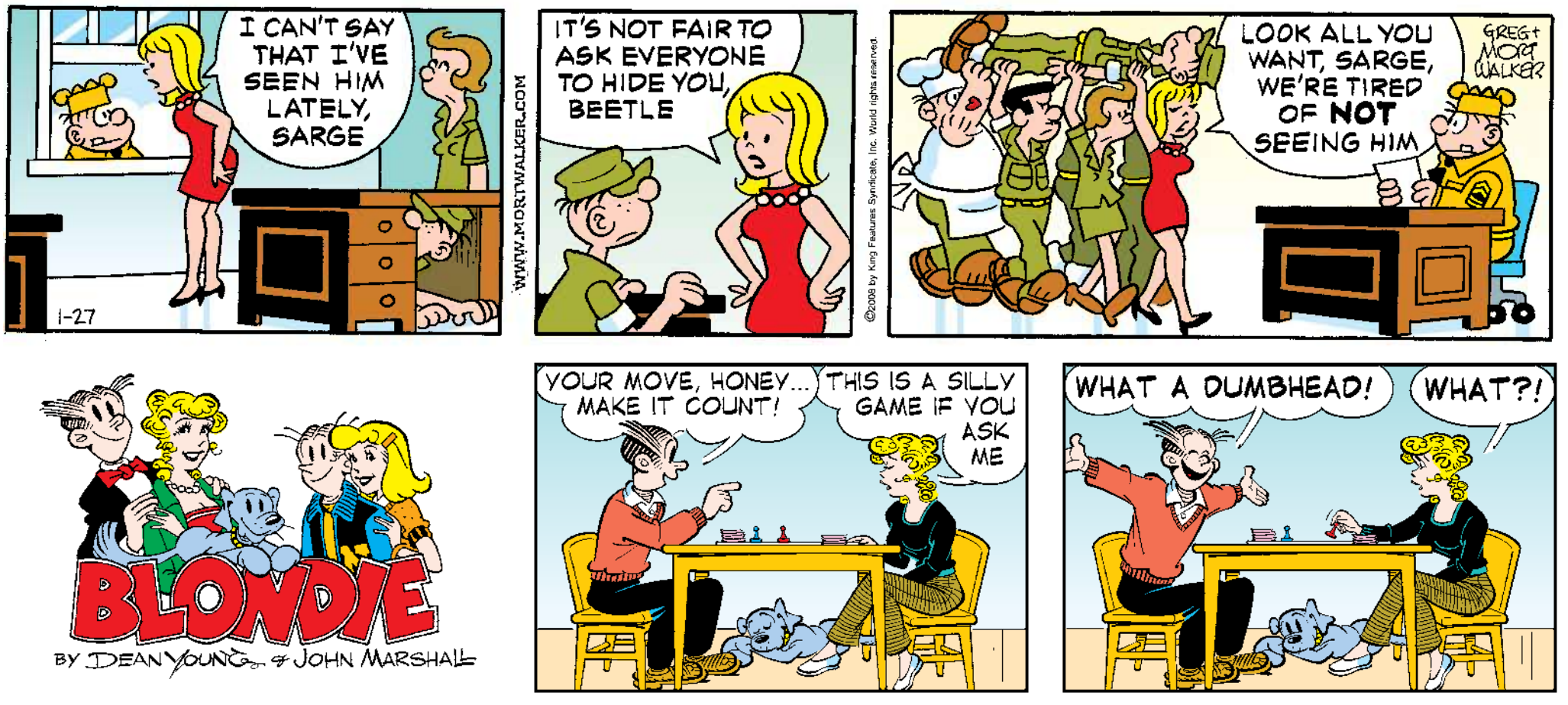
Answer -- c) Dakol, Ethiopia has an average temperature of 94 degrees Fahrenheit.

THE FAMILY CIRCUS®

By Bil Keane

I'M NOT PLAYING FOOTBALL, MOMMY. I'M GOING SLEDDING!
I'M NOT ASKING, BILLY. I'M TELLING! TAKE THIS HELMET! WEAR IT!
Jeff and Bil Keane
1-27
©2008 BIL KEANE INC., DIST. BY KING FEATURES SYND.
WWW.FAMILYCIRCUS.COM


Mort Walker's
beetle bailey®
BEETLE!!
HE MUST BE HIDING FROM ME AGAIN!
ANYBODY SEEN BEETLE?
NOT ME
UH...NOT AROUND HERE
SEEN BEETLE, COOKIE?
HE'S NOT IN THE MESS HALL
I THINK I SAW HIM GO THAT WAY


I CAN'T SAY THAT I'VE SEEN HIM LATELY, SARGE
1-27
WWW.MORTWALKER.COM
IT'S NOT FAIR TO ASK EVERYONE TO HIDE YOU, BEETLE
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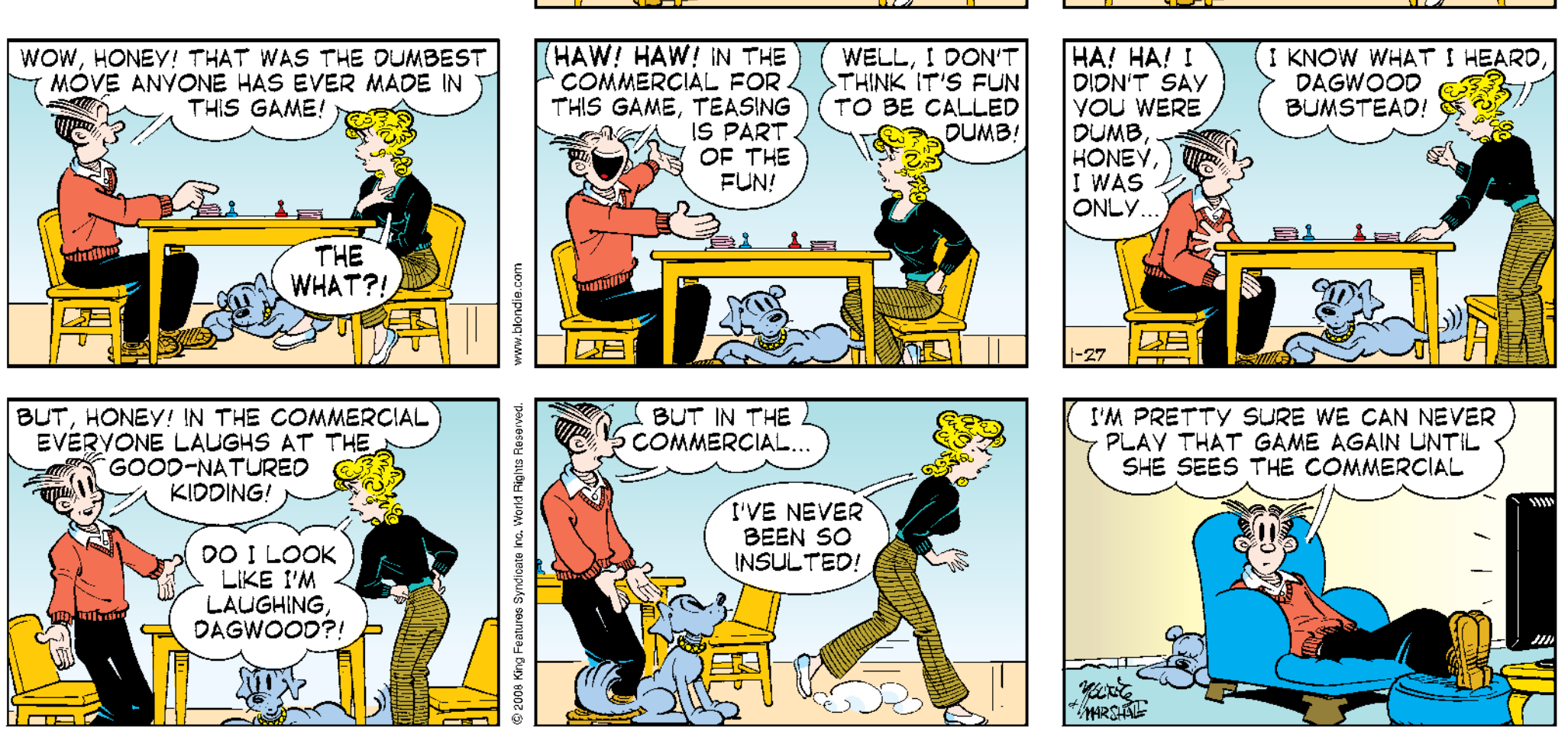
LOOK ALL YOU WANT, SARGE, WE'RE TIRED OF NOT SEEING HIM
GREG+ MORT WALKER
BLONDIE
BY DEAN YOUNG & JOHN MARSHALL
YOUR MOVE, HONEY... MAKE IT COUNT!
THIS IS A SILLY GAME IF YOU ASK ME
WHAT A DUMBHEAD!
WHAT?!


WOW, HONEY! THAT WAS THE DUMBEST MOVE ANYONE HAS EVER MADE IN THIS GAME!
THE WHAT?!
www.blondie.com
HAW! HAW! IN THE COMMERCIAL FOR THIS GAME, TEASING IS PART OF THE FUN!
WELL, I DON'T THINK IT'S FUN TO BE CALLED DUMB!
HA! HA! I DIDN'T SAY YOU WERE DUMB, HONEY, I WAS ONLY...
I KNOW WHAT I HEARD, DAGWOOD BUMSTEAD!
1-27
BUT, HONEY! IN THE COMMERCIAL EVERYONE LAUGHS AT THE GOOD-NATURED KIDDING!
DO I LOOK LIKE I'M LAUGHING, DAGWOOD?!
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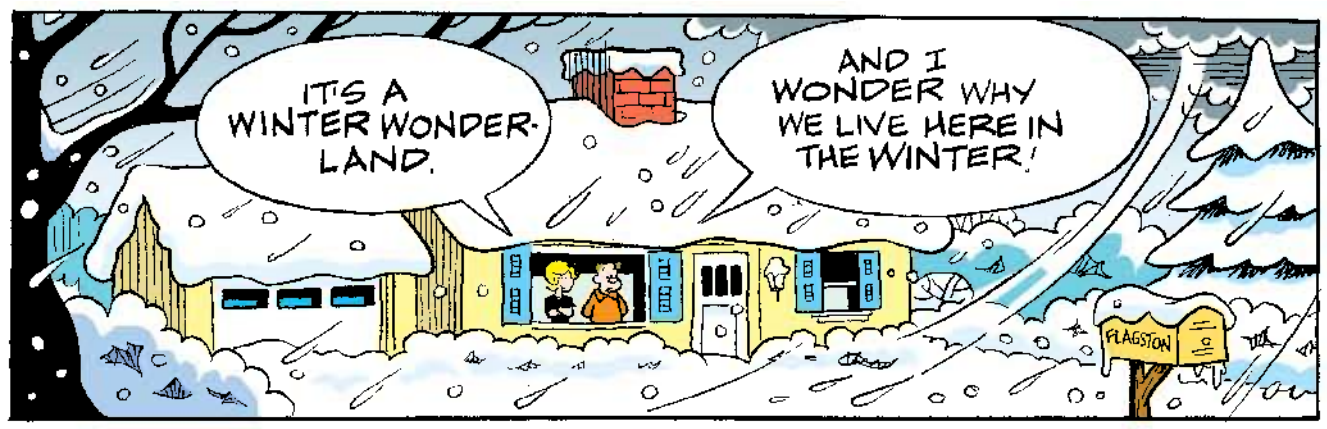
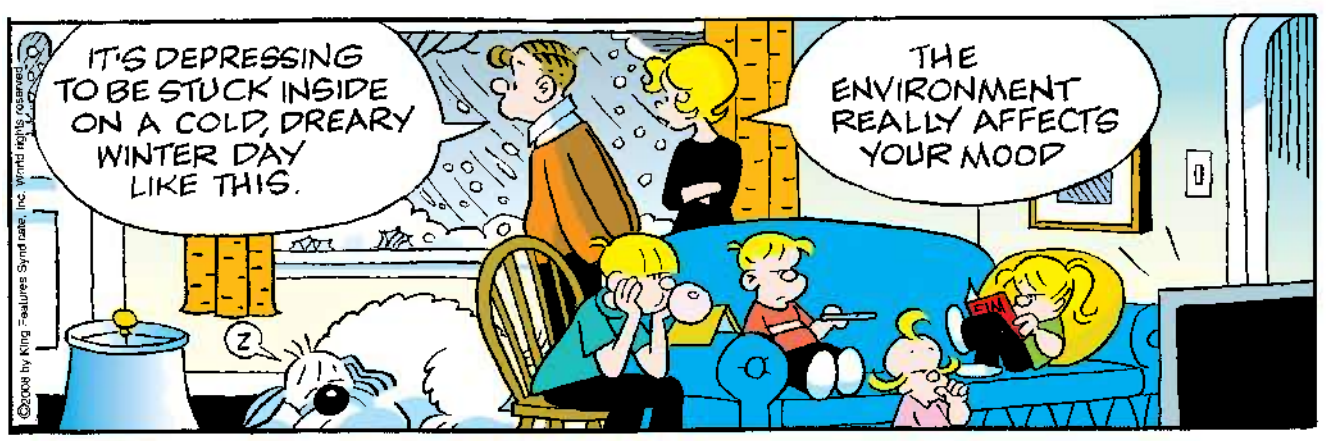
BUT IN THE COMMERCIAL...
I'VE NEVER BEEN SO INSULTED!
I'M PRETTY SURE WE CAN NEVER PLAY THAT GAME AGAIN UNTIL SHE SEES THE COMMERCIAL

Hi and Lois

by GREG & BRIAN WALKER




IT'S DEPRESSING TO BE STUCK INSIDE ON A COLD, DREARY WINTER DAY LIKE THIS.
THE ENVIRONMENT REALLY AFFECTS YOUR MOOD
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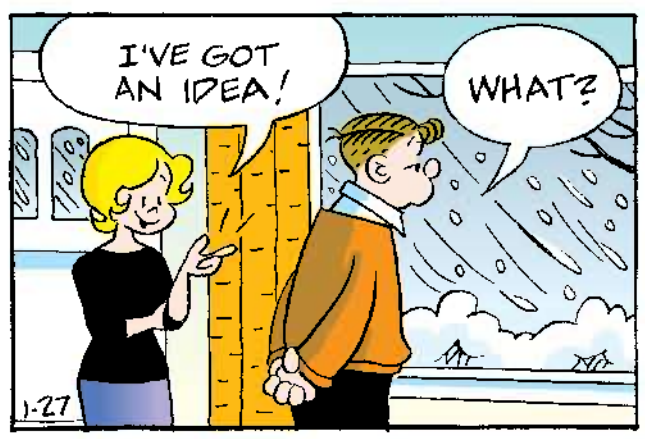
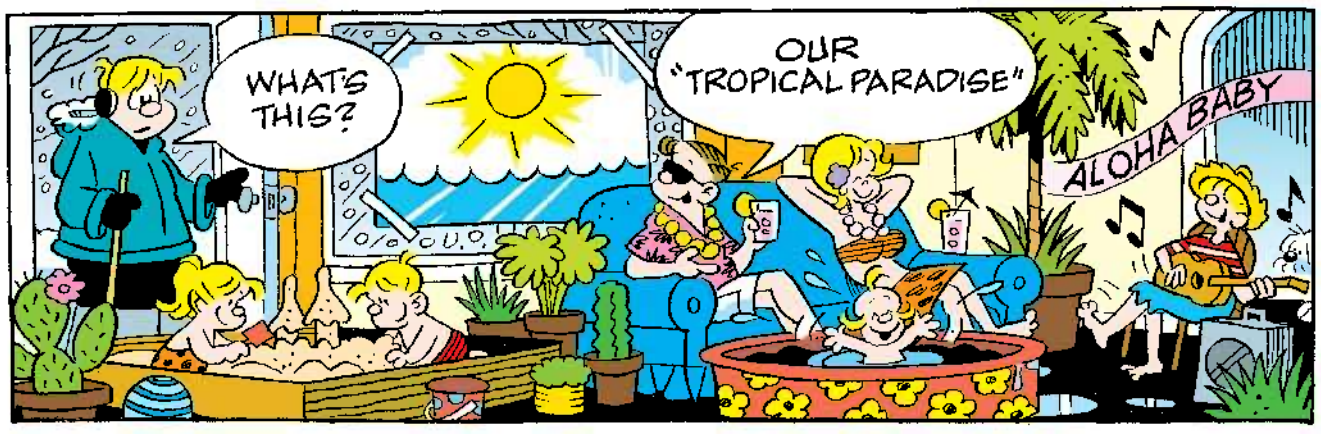
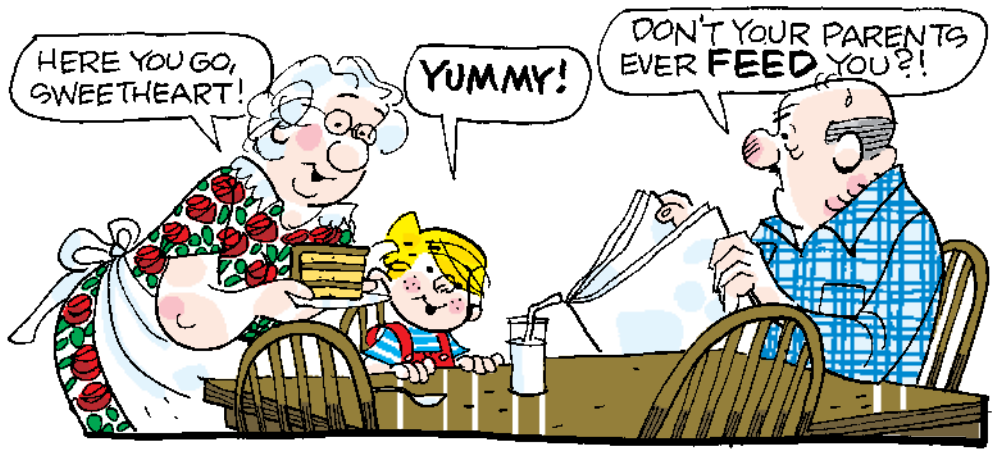


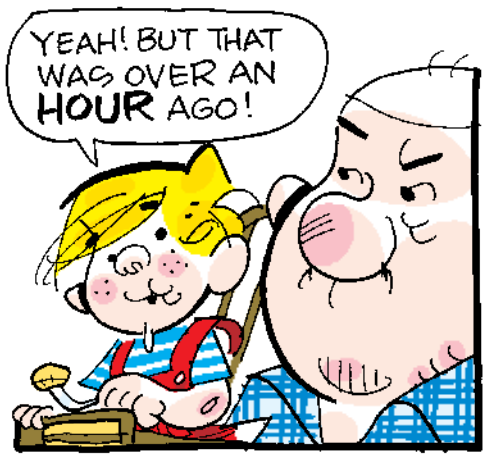


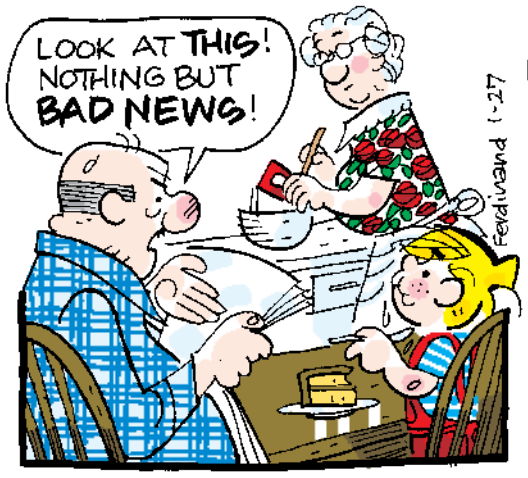
Dennis the Menace

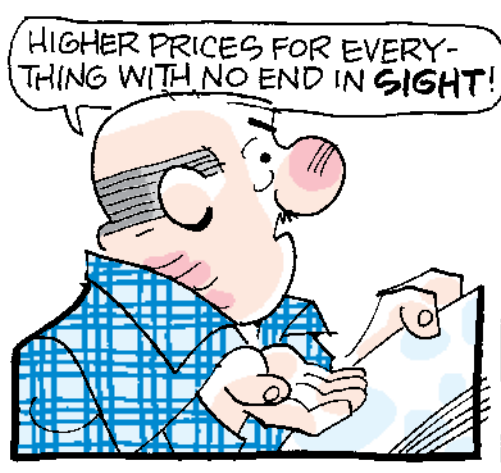
by Hank Ketcham

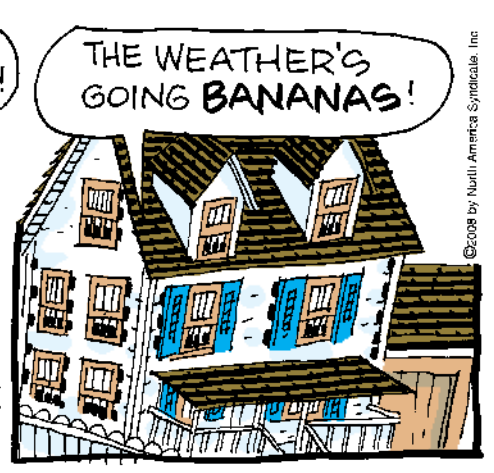
Turn the Page

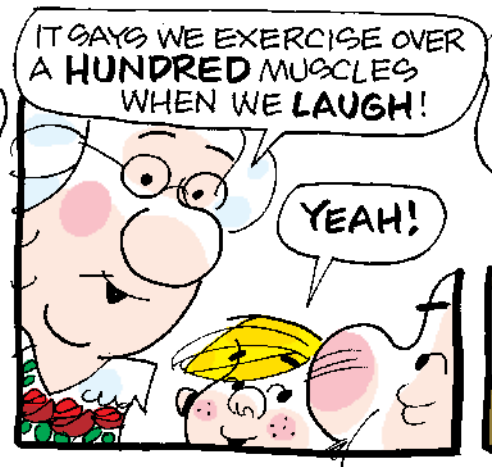


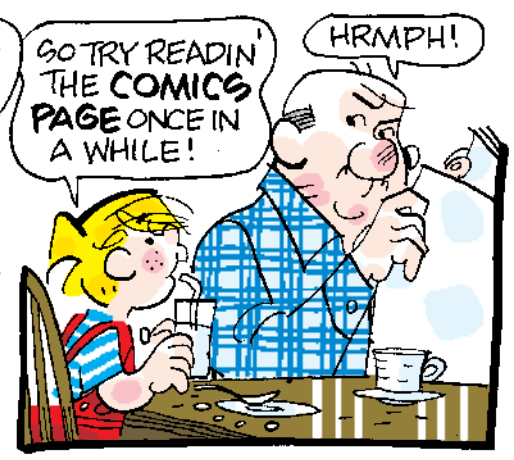


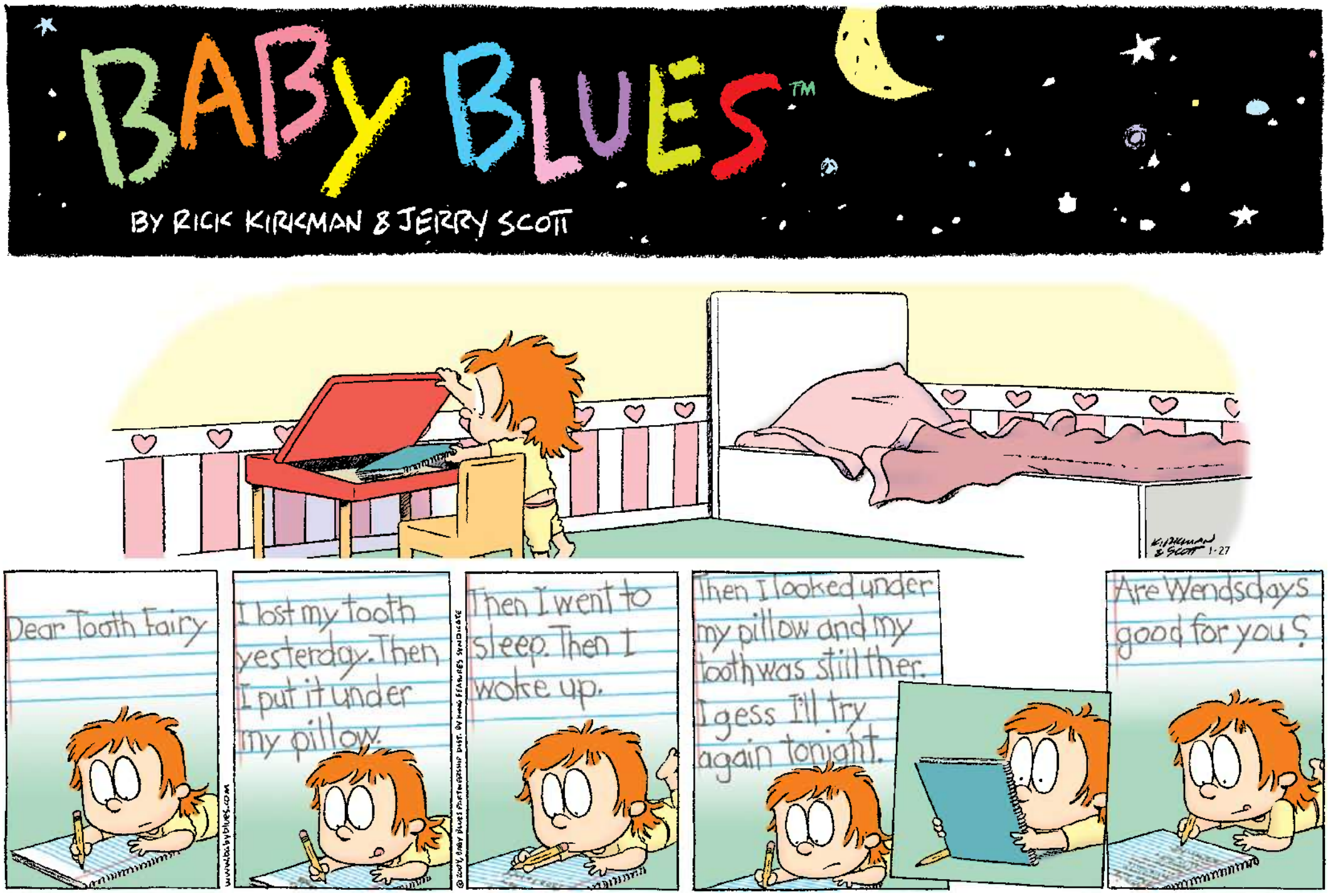











BABY BLUES™
BY RICK KIRKMAN & JERRY SCOTT
Dear Tooth Fairy
I lost my tooth yesterday. Then I put it under my pillow.
Then I went to sleep. Then I woke up.
Then I looked under my pillow and my tooth was still ther. I gess I'll try again tonight.
Are Wendsdays good for you?
www.babyblues.com
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Salome's Stars

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Guess what, Lamb? You're about to experience a new perspective on a situation you long regarded quite differently. What you learn could open more opportunities later.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) The Bold Bovine is tempted to charge into a new venture. But it might be best to take things one step at a time, so that you know just where you are at any given point.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) It's a good time to go on that fun getaway you've been planning. You'll return refreshed, ready and, yes, even eager to tackle the new challenge that awaits you.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) The Moon Child loves to fantasize about magical happenings in the early part of the week. But the sensible Crab gets down to serious business by week's end.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) What goes around comes around for those lucky Leos and Leonas whose acts of generosity could be repaid with opportunities to expand into new and exciting areas of interest.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) Your concern about your job responsibilities is commendable. But you need to take some quiet time to share with someone who has really missed being with you.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) Aspects favor getting out and meeting new people. And as a bonus, you might find that some of your newly made friends could offer important business contacts.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) You might take pride in wanting to do everything yourself. But now's a good time to ask family members to help with a demanding personal situation.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Pay more attention to the possibilities in that workplace change. It could show the way to make that long-sought turn on your career path.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) Your need to succeed might overwhelm obligations to your loved ones. Ease up on that workload and into some well-deserved time with family and friends.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) Love rules for amorous Aquarians who can make good use of their ability to communicate feelings. Don't be surprised if they're reciprocated in kind.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) Fishing for compliments? No doubt, you probably earned them. But it's best to let others believe they were the ones who uncovered the treasure you really are.

BORN THIS WEEK: Your good works flow from an open, generous heart. Nothing makes you happier than to see others happy as well.

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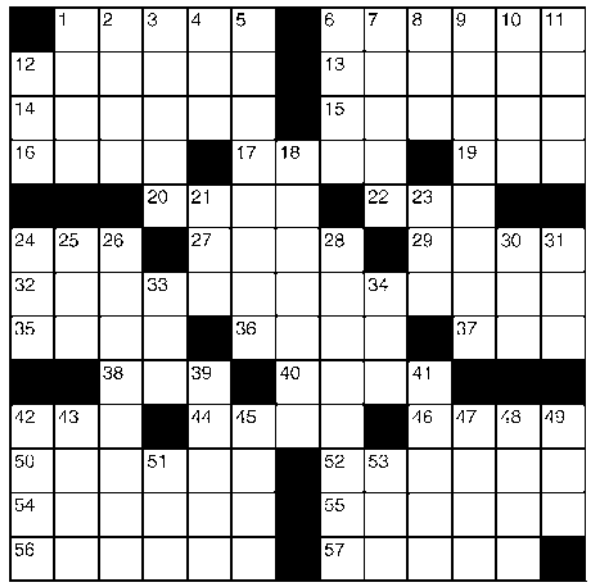
King Crossword



ACROSS
1 Wound covers
6 Old man in the family
12 Charm
13 Start the computer again
14 Eye part
15 Amass
16 Rams fans?
17 Poet Angelou
19 Prior to
20 Lids
22 D.C. figure
24 Fawn's mama
27 Mainlanders' mementos
29 Radar dot
32 NYC-based organization
35 Hereditary bit
36 Green land
37 Tackle moguls
38 "Casablanca" pianist
40 Singer Mouskouri
42 Deteriorate
44 A really long time
46 Uppercase
50 Chopping tool
52 Vent
54 Contribute
55 Pact
56 True
57 Watts or Previn

DOWN
1 Variety of duck
2 Just adorable
3 Definite invitees
4 Stein or Stiller
5 Wild onrush
6 Anatomy man
7 Summarize
8 Where "Lost" is found
9 Sour cherries
10 Rain in buckets
11 Suits to -
12 Exist
18 Foolish
21 Bullring cry
23 Kyoto cummerbund
24 Grooved on
25 Indivisible
26 Genius personified
28 Home of the Ringling Circus Museum
30 Cartoonist's supply
31 Omega preceder
33 Afternoon affair
34 X rating?
39 Long skirts
41 Put on a show
42 Opulent
43 Dos cubed
45 Refined chap
47 Winged
48 Sampras or Seeger
49 Messy environment
51 Mimic
53 Grecian vessel

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top ten

Concert tours of 2007*

1. Hannah Montana
2. The Police
3. Bruce Springsteen
4. Van Halen
5. Justin Timberlake
6. Kenny Chesney
7. Jimmy Buffett
8. Dave Matthews Band
9. Bon Jovi
10. Genesis

*gross ticket sales

Source: StubHub

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KING CROSSWORD LAST SUNDAY'S ANSWERS

L	A	S	H	■	E	G	G	■	S	K	E	W
O	B	O	E	■	R	A	N	■	H	E	R	E
K	E	Y	L	A	R	G	O	■	A	Y	L	A
I	T	A	L	I	A	■	M	E	M	B	E	R
■	■	■	O	R	T	■	E	X	P	O	■	■
J	N	K	■	S	U	B	■	P	O	A	C	H
D	E	E	P	■	M	A	S	■	O	R	S	O
S	T	Y	L	E	■	G	A	B	■	D	I	P
■	■	L	E	A	P	■	I	R	E	■	■	■
A	V	I	A	T	E	■	D	A	N	C	E	S
R	A	G	S	■	K	E	Y	S	T	O	N	E
A	S	H	E	■	O	N	E	■	E	M	I	T
M	E	T	S	■	E	D	S	■	R	E	D	S

United States

Probe launched over Detroit mayor texts

DETROIT (AP)—A prosecutor launched an investigation Friday into allegations that Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick lied under oath about an affair with his top aide. Some political observers are questioning whether the popular yet polarizing figure should stay on the job.

"Can he? Yes. Should he? That's his call," University of Nevada-Reno political science professor Eric Herzik said Friday. "But if you are being prosecuted, your ability to run the city is incredibly compromised."

Kilpatrick

Others believe Kilpatrick could fight perjury charges and still fulfill his mayoral duties. Victoria Mantzopoulos, chair of the political science department at the University of Detroit-Mercy, said it depends on the political machine he has around him.

"I think he can work through it," Mantzopoulos said. "I've heard people ask that he resign. I think that is more on the issue of the affair as opposed to the true ability to continue in his role."

Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy said Friday that her office would investigate reports that Kilpatrick and Chief of Staff Christine Beatty exchanged romantic text messages in 2002 and 2003, despite testifying in a trial last summer that they did not have a physical relationship then.

Fire closes Vegas' Monte Carlo; 17 hurt

LAS VEGAS (AP)—A fire on the roof of the Monte Carlo hotel-casino forced guests and gamblers to flee and sent flaming embers raining down on the Las Vegas Strip, but firefighters quickly gained control of the blaze. No serious injuries were reported.

The midmorning fire spread across the rooftop facade, made of a foam building material. Orange flames lapped at the 32-story hotel's name in large script.

An ambulance company spokeswoman said 17 people were taken to area hospitals with minor injuries, mostly from inhaling smoke or from fleeing the building. None of the 120 firefighters who fought the blaze was hurt.

"It could have been very serious," Clark County Fire Chief Steve Smith said. "Due to the aggressive firefighting tactics of our personnel we were able to contain it."

Strict fire codes were adopted for Las Vegas resorts since a 1980 fire killed 87 people down the street from the Monte Carlo at the old MGM Grand hotel, now the Bally's Las Vegas.

Smith said it was too early to assess damage or say what caused Friday's fire, which began just before 11 a.m. and was under control in about an hour. There was no immediate indication of criminal activity or arson, but "nothing is ruled out at this time," Smith said.

Smoke and flames rise after a fire broke out at the Monte Carlo hotel-casino in Las Vegas, Friday, Jan. 25, 2008. AP

Clark County spokesman Erik Pappa said county officials were told welders were working on the roof of the building before the fire.

Smith called the Monte Carlo blaze an exterior fire, which was largely confined to the rooftop and the facade of the upper floors. The facade was made of a foam material that "melted off the side of the building and started a few fires below," Smith said.

Employees went door-to-door evacuating the hotel, said Gordon Absher, a spokesman for the resort's owner, MGM Mirage Inc. The fire chief said no one had to be rescued.

1 killed, 1 missing in Calif. avalanches

WRIGHTWOOD, Calif. (AP)—Mountain avalanches killed an off-duty ski patrol worker and left another person missing Friday as California strained under nearly a week of snow and rain.

One avalanche struck Friday afternoon at Wrightwood in the snow-laden San Gabriel Mountains. A 23-year-old employee of the Mountain High ski area was pulled from the debris, but died at a hospital later that afternoon, a hospital spokeswoman said. His name was not released.

As night fell, searchers were still looking for another person who was missing after a second avalanche about a half-mile from the first, on national forest land.

"I'm sure that the avalanches are due to the amount of snow that has fallen over the past several days," said Tim Wessel, division chief for the San Bernardino County Fire Department.

The avalanches were outside Mountain High's boundaries. The resort, which was closed by high winds a day earlier, remained open.

An avalanche advisory was issued for the ski area at nearby Mount Baldy, a 10,000-foot peak about 40 miles east of Los Angeles, and the lifts there were closed, Angeles National Forest spokesman Stanton Florea said.

Elsewhere, utility crews repaired electrical outages while highway crews worked to keep mountain routes open.

Nearly 11,000 homes and businesses throughout Southern California were without electricity, including about 6,700 Los Angeles Department of Water and Power customers.

A 40-mile stretch of Interstate 5 over Tejon Pass north of Los Angeles reopened after being closed for two days and stranding hundreds of drivers. Highway Patrol officers escorted cars over the summit.

"If it becomes snowy or icy, they'll close down the freeway at once," Officer Miguel Leuvano said.

Senators consider rebates for retirees

WASHINGTON (AP)—Retirees living off Social Security are frustrated that they won't get tax rebate checks through a bipartisan economic stimulus package before the House. Senate Democrats Friday began efforts to include them.

The Senate is also considering an extension of jobless benefits to the $150 billion package of rebates and business tax cuts in a deal wrapped up Thursday between House leaders and President Bush.

Bush urged Congress on Friday to quickly pass the package without any further spending. "I strongly believe it would be a mistake to delay or derail this bill," Bush said.

"I understand the desire to add provisions from both the right and the left," he said, adding that would be an error.

Senate Democrats are refusing to rubber stamp the House measure. That raises the possibility of protracted negotiations if Democrats are successful in adding giving retirees tax rebates, extending unemployment benefits, boosting heating subsidies for the poor and temporarily increasing food stamp payments.

Those are all items floated by top Senate Democrats left out of the negotiations between the administration and House leaders.

ACROSS THE NATION

Gandhi grandson leaves peace center

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (AP)—Mahatma Gandhi's grandson resigned from the peace institute he co-founded after condemnation of his comments that Israel and the Jews are the biggest players in a culture of violence that "is eventually going to destroy humanity." Arun Gandhi, the fifth grandson of the revered pacifist, said Friday that his comments, which were posted on an online forum, were meant "to generate a healthy discussion on the proliferation of violence." "Instead, unintentionally, my words have resulted in pain, anger, confusion and embarrassment. I deeply regret these consequences," Gandhi said. He apologized "for my poorly worded post," saying he shouldn't have implied that Israeli government policies reflected the views of all Jewish people.

Calif. farmers want to sell water

FRESNO, Calif. (AP)—With water becoming increasingly precious in California, a rising number of farmers figure they can make more money by selling their water than by actually growing something. Because farmers get their water at subsidized rates, some of them see financial opportunity this year in selling their allotments to Los Angeles and other desperately thirsty cities across Southern California, as well as to other farms. "It just makes dollars and sense right now," said Bruce Rolen, a third-generation farmer who grows rice, wheat and other crops in Northern California's lush Sacramento Valley. Instead of sowing in April, Rolen plans to let 100 of his 250 acres of white rice lie fallow and sell his irrigation water on the open market, where it could fetch up to three times the normal price.

Spike in gold prices draws prospectors

GIRDWOOD, Alaska (AP)—With gold prices reaching an all-time high of $900 an ounce and the economy slumping, Alaska expects to see more and more people trekking to the edge of the continent in search of gold. Membership in gold prospecting clubs is climbing nationwide, along with sales of pans, dredges, metal detectors and other small-scale mining equipment. A trade show recently hosted by the Gold Prospectors Association of America in Orange County, Calif., typified the trend. The group has received hundreds of calls and e-mails from interested gold seekers. New memberships are increasing, and the number of membership renewals at the close of 2007 was twice as high as the year before, said Brandon Johnson, the director of operations. As a result, the association is preparing to hire more staff.

Items in alleged hijack plot not banned

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Authorities said a teenager accused of concocting an ill-conceived plot to hijack an airliner got on board with handcuffs and duct tape—a combination that doesn't violate security procedures aimed at thwarting terrorists. The 16-year-old boy was removed from a Southwest Airlines flight at Nashville's airport Tuesday and arrested. Authorities said he was calm during the flight, made no apparent attempt to commandeer the plane and had little chance of succeeding had he tried. Transportation Security Administration spokesman Sterling Payne wouldn't comment on how authorities became suspicious of the teenager, but the agency expressed concern about the items he was allowed to carry on board.

Asia

30 killed in Pakistan borderlands violence

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP) —Fighting spread in Pakistan's volatile borderlands on Friday as the military pounded hideouts of Taliban militants who had hijacked ammunition supply trucks, killing up to 30 suspected rebels, the army said.

Two paramilitary troops were killed and 10 wounded in the clashes around Dara Adam Khel, a town on a key strategic route linking Pakistan's northwestern frontier with the rest of the country.

While the Taliban number relatively few in the town, their ability to intercept a military supply convoy has worrying implications. The route connects Peshawar—the army's regional headquarters just 25 miles away—with the battlefields of Waziristan, a lawless region regarded as a stronghold for Taliban and al-Qaida.

In the past two weeks, militants have increased attacks on Pakistani security forces in the region. Hundreds of fighters have launched assaults on remote military forts, drawing comparisons with Taliban tactics against NATO forces in southern Afghanistan.

President Pervez Musharraf, who is touring Europe and trying to firm up his shaky standing after months of escalating violence and political turmoil at home, has dismissed the rebel offensive as mere "pinpricks" against its 100,000 troops in the tribal regions.

He also dismissed Friday a U.S. offer to send a small number of American combat troops to Pakistan to help fight the insurgency.

16 bodies are found dumped in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) —Sixteen civilians were found hacked to death in a jungle in northern Sri Lanka, while fighting elsewhere in the region killed 24 Tamil Tiger rebels and seven soldiers, the military said Friday.

Military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said the bodies were found dumped in a swamp Thursday near Kabithigollewa village, 170 miles north of the capital, Colombo. He suspected the separatist Tamil Tigers were behind the killings.

He said the victims were believed to be a group of civilians who had been searching for their cattle. The bodies had not been identified, but a forensics team was sent to investigate, he said.

The rebels were not immediately available for comment.

Unexplained killings have increased in Sri Lanka since hostilities heightened between the government and Tamil Tiger rebels over the past two years. Bodies have been discovered burned beyond recognition, headless, blindfolded and naked.

Human rights groups have accused Sri Lankan troops of summarily executing people suspected of having links to the insurgents, but the government has denied the allegations.

Pakistan's Musharraf says no US troops

DAVOS, Switzerland (AP)—Pakistan's president said Friday U.S. troops cannot do a better job than his forces in routing the Taliban and al-Qaida, and the United States should increase its presence in Afghanistan instead to deal with the growing insurgency there.

Pervez Musharraf reiterated that Pakistan opposes any foreign forces on its soil and said "the man in the street will not allow this—he will come out and agitate."

Musharraf was responding to a question about reports that the U.S. government was considering far more aggressive covert operations in Pakistan along the border with Afghanistan, and Defense Secretary Robert Gates' offer Thursday to send a small number of combat troops to Pakistan to help fight the insurgency there if Pakistani authorities ask for help.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Indonesian convicted in activist death

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—Police will question Indonesian intelligence agents for the first time about their alleged involvement in the poisoning death of a top human rights activist after a former pilot was convicted Friday of murder. The questioning could break years of deadlock over the investigation into the killing of Munir Thalib, who had a reputation for exposing military abuse during the U.S.-backed dictatorship of former President Suharto. Thalib died of arsenic poisoning on a commercial Garuda flight from Jakarta to Amsterdam in September 2004. A lower court in 2005 convicted Polycarpus Priyanto, an ex-pilot for Garuda, in the killing. The Supreme Court acquitted him 10 months later, drawing international criticism. But the same court overturned the acquittal Friday based on new evidence and ruled that Priyanto committed premeditated murder.

Philippines scraps $29.3M helicopter deal

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippine Department of National Defense scrapped a proposed $29.3 million deal for six attack helicopters after accusing a U.S. manufacturer of altering its bid, an official said Friday. Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro rejected a proposal by Asian Aerospace Corp.—a representative of the U.S. aircraft manufacturer McDonell Douglas—after a fact-finding committee found "unauthorized alterations of the technical specifications" for six night-capable attack helicopters, Defense Undersecretary Ariston delos Reyes said. Asian Aaerospace's proposal for the six MD-530F helicopters did not meet the military's requirements, including a 1,360 kilogram (3,000 pound) payload capacity, delos Santos said.

Coalition soldier dies in Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—U.S.-led coalition and Afghan troops clashed with insurgents while searching a compound near the Pakistani frontier on Friday, leaving one coalition soldier dead, a statement said. Troops called in airstrikes, which "destroyed an insurgent cell" after the clash in Nari district of Kunar province, the coalition statement said. The nationalities of the dead and three wounded soldiers were not released. Most of the troops in that area are American. An Afghan soldier and an interpreter working for the coalition were also wounded, the statement said. It did not say how many suspected militants were killed.

China halts coal exports amid shortage

SHANGHAI, China (AP)—The coldest, snowiest winter in decades has left millions of Chinese without heating and running water, leading the government on Friday to order a suspension of coal exports as the country struggles to meet its power needs. The Transport Ministry's emergency notice, posted on its Web site, warned of "severe" consequences for failing to comply with the order, which will stay in effect through the Lunar New Year holiday in February and the annual session of the national legislature in early March. The notice ordered railways and other transport networks to make hauling coal and food a priority over coming weeks. Ocean shippers should stop loading coal for export and divert shipments "for domestic thermal coal requirements," if needed.

World

'Colombia plans aggression'

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) —President Hugo Chavez on Friday accused neighboring Colombia and the United States of plotting a military "aggression" against Venezuela.

"I accuse the government of Colombia of devising a conspiracy, acting as a pawn of the U.S. empire, of devising a military provocation against Venezuela," Chavez said.

"A military aggression is being prepared," Chavez added, saying that Washington aims to "oblige us to respond, and later a war could be set off."

He cited intelligence reports but did not offer evidence to support his claim.

Venezuela and Colombia have been locked in a diplomatic crisis since November, when Colombian President Alvaro Uribe ended Chavez's mediation role with Colombia's leftist rebels in seeking a hostages-for-prisoners swap.

Chavez warned Colombia not to attempt a "provocation," warning that it would trigger a decision by Venezuela to cut off all oil exports.

"In that scenario, write it down: the price of oil would reach $300, because there wouldn't be oil for anyone," Chavez said. "The invaders would have to step over our dead bodies."

Beirut bomb kills terrorism investigator

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP)—A car bomb Friday killed one of Lebanon's top terrorism investigators who was probing assassinations of prominent anti-Syrian figures and a series of other attacks in recent years.

Capt. Wissam Eid, 31, worked for the police intelligence agency which is closely tied to the Western-backed government and had survived two previous assassination attempts. The attack also killed his bodyguard and three passers-by and wounded 37 people, police said.

A huge plume of black smoke rose from the site of the attack in the Lebanese capital. Television footage showed orange flames shooting up into the sky, as several cars burned and firefighters struggled to put out the flames.

AP

An investigator checks the scene of explosion with a sniffing dog in Beirut, Lebanon Friday, Jan. 25, 2008.

Six powers propose new Iran sanctions

DAVOS, Switzerland (AP) —New U.N. sanctions against Iran would require countries to ban the entry of individuals involved in the Iranian nuclear program—a step up from a previous call for vigilance over their travel, according to a document obtained Friday.

The latest round of penalties would also for the first time ban trade in equipment and technology that can be used in both civilian and nuclear programs, according to elements that would form the basis of a new U.N. resolution.

It would call on countries to inspect cargo heading to or from Iran "provided there are reasonable grounds to believe" that prohibited goods are being transported, the document obtained by The Associated Press said.

WORLD BRIEFS

Fighting erupts in western Kenyan town

NAKURU, Kenya (AP)—Fierce street battles erupted in a western Kenyan city Friday, leaving bodies lying on the ground with machete slashes and pierced with arrows, witnesses said. At least 12 people were killed and hundreds of homes were burned down in the latest explosion of fury over a deeply flawed presidential election. The violence broke out in Nakuru, the country's fourth largest city. Youths with bows and arrows threw cans filled with gasoline at homes, setting them ablaze, and fired illegal homemade guns. One victim was stoned to death, said a local newspaper reporter who witnessed the killing. As the violence raged, President Mwai Kibaki and opposition leader Raila Odinga remained far apart on the central question of who really won the Dec. 27 election.

Gazans breach Egyptian border again

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP)—Hamas-backed militants driving bulldozers knocked down more fortifications Friday along the Gaza-Egypt border—a brazen challenge to Egyptian riot police, who abandoned their positions after attempting to reseal the frontier using human chains, dogs and water cannons. Militants in black clothing, some of them masked, stood atop a bulldozer as it knocked down concrete slabs under the watchful eyes of Hamas security officials, who turned a blind eye and were later seen patrolling on the Egyptian side of the border. Thousands of Palestinians flooded into Egypt, pushing through several openings as Egyptian troops retreated to their bases on the other side of the border. Palestinians positioned cranes next to the border and lifted crates of supplies into Gaza, including camels and cows.

Suspected crime lord arrested in Moscow

MOSCOW (AP)—A suspected crime boss sought by the FBI for years has been arrested on a Moscow street in connection with a tax evasion probe into owners of a cosmetic-shop chain, officials said Friday. Semyon Mogilevich, a Ukrainian-born Russian citizen accused by FBI officials of involvement in criminal enterprises ranging from securities fraud to weapons trafficking, was detained late Wednesday, said Angela Kostoyeva, spokeswoman for the Interior Ministry's anti-organized crime unit. Mogilevich was detained under the alias of Sergei Schneider, the spokeswoman said, adding that he has used 17 other names and holds passports from several countries. A Moscow court approved his formal arrest Thursday. State television networks showed footage of the portly Mogilevich as police held him and some bodyguards up against a car.

Focus

New generation of homeless vets emerges

By ERIN McCLAM
AP NATIONAL WRITER

LEEDS, Mass. (AP)—Peter Mohan traces the path from the Iraqi battlefield to this lifeless conference room, where he sits in a kilt and a Camp Kill Yourself T-shirt and calmly describes how he became a sad cliche: a homeless veteran.

There was a happy homecoming, but then an accident—car crash, broken collarbone. And then a move east, close to his wife's new job but away from his best friends.

And then self-destruction: He would gun his motorcycle to 100 mph and try to stand on the seat. He would wait for his wife to leave in the morning, draw the blinds and open up whatever bottle of booze was closest.

He would pull out his gun, a .45-caliber, semiautomatic pistol. He would lovingly clean it, or just look at it and put it away. Sometimes place it in his mouth.

"I don't know what to do anymore," his wife, Anna, told him one day. "You can't be here anymore."

Peter Mohan never did find a steady job after he left Iraq. He lost his wife—a judge granted their divorce this fall—and he lost his friends and he lost his home, and now he is here, in a shelter.

He is 28 years old. "People come back from war different," he offers by way of a summary.

This is not a new story in America: A young veteran back from war whose struggle to rejoin society has failed, at least for the moment, fighting demons and left homeless.

But it is happening to a new generation. As the war in Afghanistan plods on in its seventh year, and the war in Iraq in its fifth, a new cadre of homeless veterans is taking shape.

And with it come the questions: How is it that a nation that became so familiar with the archetypal homeless, combat-addled Vietnam veteran is now watching as more homeless veterans turn up from new wars?

What lessons have we not learned? Who is failing these people? Or is homelessness an unavoidable byproduct of war, of young men and women who devote themselves to serving their country and then see things no man or woman should?

■ ■ ■

For as long as the United States has sent its young men—and later its young women—off to war, it has watched as a segment of them come home and lose the battle with their own memories, their own scars, and wind up without homes.

The Civil War produced thousands of wandering veterans. Frequently addicted to morphine, they were known as "tramps," searching for jobs and, in many cases, literally still tending their wounds.

More than a decade after the end of World War I, the "Bonus Army" descended on Washington—demanding immediate payment on benefits that had been promised to them, but payable years later—and were routed by the U.S. military.

Veteran of the Afghan and Iraq wars Peter Mohan, right, hugs Vietnam veteran Robert Whitfield, of Haydenville, Mass., left, in a hallway at a veterans homeless shelter, in Leeds, Mass., Tuesday, Dec. 4, 2007. Whitfield is a Veterans Administration employee.
AP

And, most publicly and perhaps most painfully, there was Vietnam: Tens of thousands of war-weary veterans, infamously rejected or forgotten by many of their own fellow citizens.

Now it is happening again, in small but growing numbers.

For now, about 1,500 veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan have been identified by the Department of Veterans Affairs. About 400 of them have taken part in VA programs designed to target homelessness.

The 1,500 are a small, young segment of an estimated 336,000 veterans in the United States who were homeless at some point in 2006, the most recent year for which statistics are available, according to the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

Still, advocates for homeless veterans use words like "surge" and "onslaught" and even "tsunami" to describe what could happen in the coming years, as both wars continue and thousands of veterans struggle with post-traumatic stress.

People who have studied post-war trauma say there is always a lengthy gap between coming home—the time of parades and backslaps and "The Boys Are Back in Town" on the local FM station—and the moments of utter darkness that leave some of them homeless.

In that time, usually a period of years, some veterans focus on the horrors they saw on the battlefield, or the friends they lost, or why on earth they themselves deserved to come home at all. They self-medicate, develop addictions, spiral down.

How—or perhaps the better question is why—is this happening again?

"I really wish I could answer that question," says Anthony Belcher, an outreach supervisor at New Directions, which conducts monthly sweeps of Skid Row in Los Angeles, identifying homeless veterans and trying to help them get over addictions.

"It's the same question I've been asking myself and everyone around me. I'm like, wait, wait, hold it, we did this before. I don't know how our society can allow this to happen again."

■ ■ ■

Mental illness, financial troubles and difficulty in finding affordable housing are generally accepted as the three primary causes of homelessness among veterans, and in the case of Iraq and Afghanistan, the first has raised particular concern.

Iraq veterans are less likely to have substance abuse problems but more likely to suffer mental illness, particularly post-traumatic stress, according to the Veterans Administration. And that stress by itself can trigger substance abuse.

Some advocates say there are also some factors particular to the Iraq war, like multiple deployments and the proliferation of improvised explosive devices, that could be pulling an early trigger on stress disorders that can lead to homelessness.

While many Vietnam veterans began showing manifestations of stress disorders roughly 10 years after returning from the front, Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have shown the signs much earlier.

That could also be because stress disorders are much better understood now than they were a generation ago, advocates say.

"There's something about going back, and a third and a fourth time, that really aggravates that level of stress," said Michael Blecker, executive director of Swords to Plowshares," a San Francisco homeless-vet outreach program.

"And being in a situation where you have these IEDs, everywhere's a combat zone. There's no really safe zone there. I think that all is just a stew for post-traumatic stress disorder."

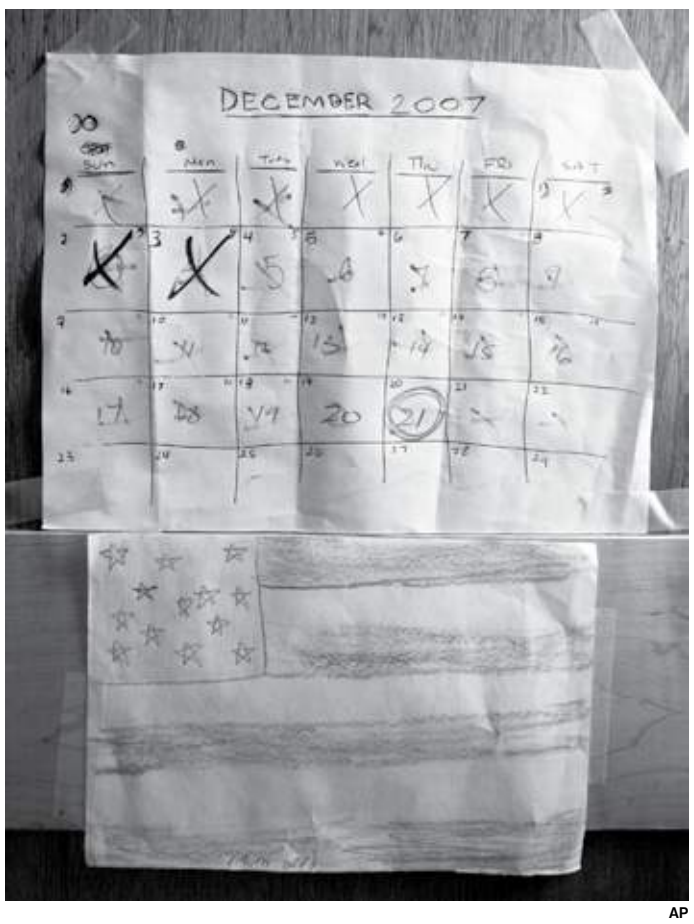
Others point to something more difficult to define, something about American culture that—while celebrating and honoring troops in a very real way upon their homecoming—ultimately forgets them.

This is not necessarily due to deliberate negligence. Perhaps because of the lingering memory of Vietnam, when troops returned from an unpopular war to face open hostility, many Americans have taken care to express support for the troops even as they solidly disapprove of the war in Iraq.

But it remains easy for veterans home from Iraq for several years, and teetering on the edge of losing a job or home, to slip into the shadows. And as their troubles mount, they often feel increasingly alienated from friends and family members.

"War changes people," says John Driscoll, vice president for operations and programs at the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. "Your trust in people is strained. You've been separated from loved ones and friends. The camaraderie between troops is very extreme, and now you feel vulnerable."

See NEW on Page 20



AP

A hand-made calendar is posted above a drawing of an American flag in the the living quarters of Iraq war combat veteran Mike Lally at a homeless shelter, in Leeds, Mass., Wednesday, Dec. 5, 2007. Lally did two tours of duty in Iraq while serving with the U.S. Marine Corps. The calendar shows days spent in the homeless shelter crossed off.

AP

U.S. Marine veteran of the Iraq war Mike Lally appears in his living quarters in a veterans homeless shelter, in Leeds, Mass., Thursday, Dec. 6, 2007. Lally did two tours of duty in Iraq while serving with the U.S. Marine Corps.

Life & Style

Acting son following everyman footsteps

By ROBERT W. WELKOS
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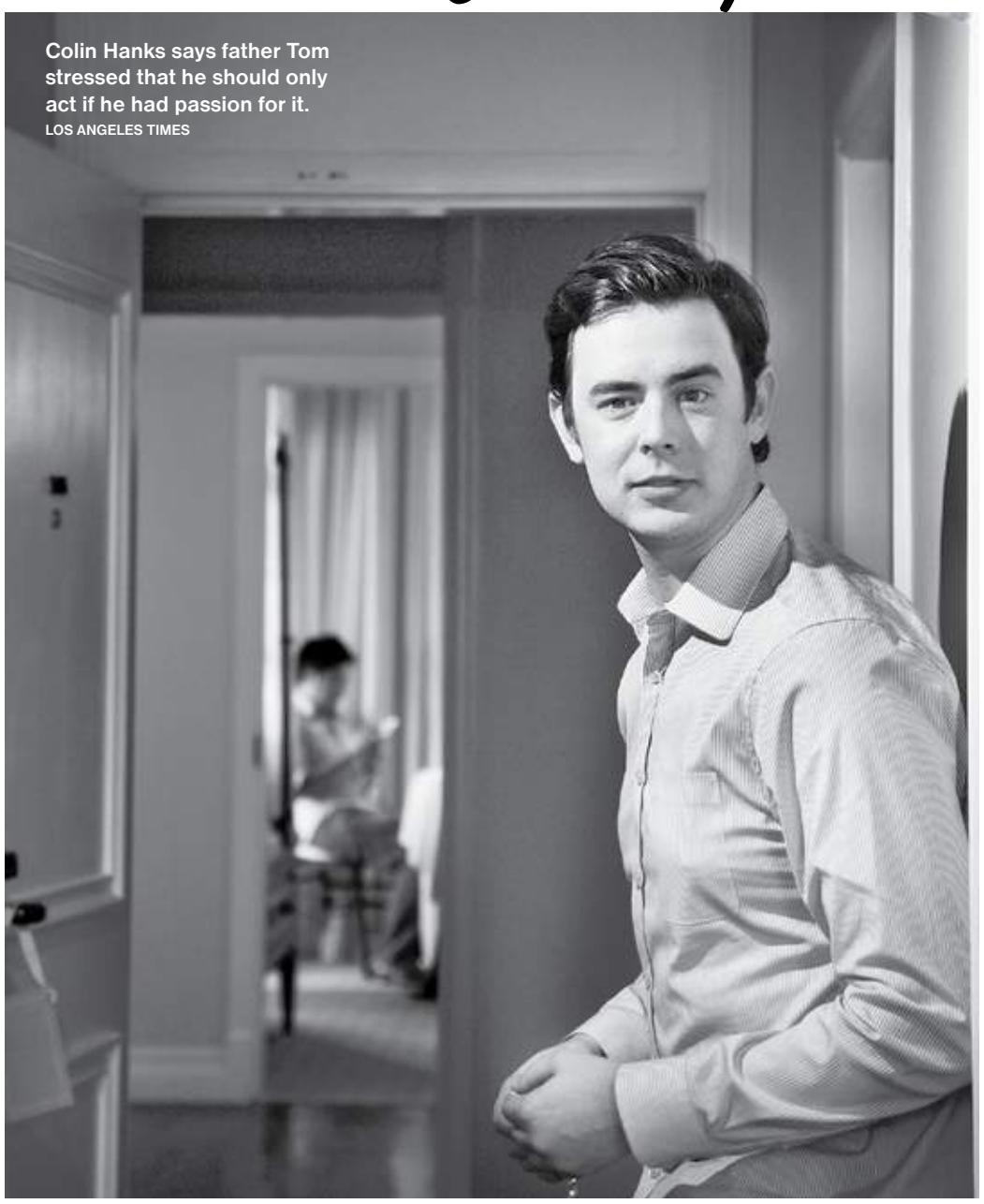

Colin Hanks says father Tom stressed that he should only act if he had passion for it.
LOS ANGELES TIMES

HOLLYWOOD—He's tall and slender with neatly cropped dark hair, a boyish grin and glasses—just the kind of guy-next-door persona that allows the actor to walk the streets and not always get noticed. But study his features more closely and the resemblance to his famous movie star father becomes clearly evident. Indeed, the Sunday Times of London once wrote of Colin Hanks that his "lost-puppy eyes" confirm he is Tom Hanks' son.

At 6-feet-1, he said, he is taller than his dad, but as he points out, "he weighs more than me."

Over the years, Oscar-winning Tom Hanks has perfected his everyman persona in films like "Sleepless in Seattle" and "Saving Private Ryan." And it's that same screen quality that his eldest son exudes as he pursues his own acting career. He appears opposite Diane Lane in the thriller "Untraceable," which opens nationwide Friday. And last week, "The Great Buck Howard," a comedy that stars John Malkovich and Hanks, had its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival.

"He didn't want me to be an actor," Hanks said when asked what advice his dad gave him. "He wanted me to find out what I was passionate about. And it just so happened that it was acting, to which he said, 'OK, well, you could do it as an actor. I feel you have the ability to do so.' But he stressed that it really needed to be something I wanted and was passionate about."

The son harbors no illusions about where his acting career is in relation to his dad's. "He's been on top of Everest now for a long time," Hanks said, then quipped: "I may be at the lower base camp of Machu Picchu. We might be both climbing mountains, but they are very different peaks."

But Colin Hanks is no wet-behind-the-ears performer.

In "Untraceable," Lane and Hanks play FBI agents Jennifer Marsh and Griffin Dowd, who go in pursuit of a tech-savvy Internet predator who tortures and kills his victims on a Web site.

To gear up for their roles, Lane and Hanks spent time with real-life FBI agents who work on cybercrimes. "My (character) ostensibly is really there to be funny," Hanks said, "and then, in a very significant way, he moves the story along."

Hanks said he had trouble at first comprehending why his character had such a penchant for joking around the office with his female partner, since their work—tracking down pedophiles and purveyors of kiddie porn—is so horrific.

"It wasn't until we sort of saw how the real agents let the steam out a little bit by using humor and making fun of each other that I went, 'OK, that's where it comes into play,' " Hanks said.

Director Gregory Hoblit said casting Hanks was tricky because he wanted the agent to embody a certain innocence that would allow the audience to react with, "Oh, no! Don't do that to him!" when the killer begins stalking the FBI agents.

"Colin is a walking, talking personality," Hoblit said. "He can take a fairly pedestrian dialogue, inasmuch as it's there, and give it a little color and life and do it well." The director noted: "He's kind of at that gawky age—tall and slender. I think he is very appealing. He's probably an actor who will get more interesting as he gets older and his face gets more interesting. There's no question he has talent. Look at the movies he's made over the last few years. He looks like he's 14."

In "The Great Buck Howard," written and directed by Sean McGinly, Hanks plays a recent law school dropout who answers an ad to be road manager for a celebrity performer, thinking this will be the big break that will get him into the entertainment industry. Instead, he discovers he has signed on to work for Buck Howard (Malkovich), a has-been magician trying to revitalize his career. Tom Hanks, who produced the movie, plays Colin Hanks' on-screen father.

"I don't really want to build it up too much," Colin Hanks said of the pairing. "We're in two scenes. I want to keep everyone's expectations down. He plays my father. That's obviously part of what makes the movie memorable for me."

Although he might be considered part of Hollywood royalty, Colin Hanks points out that he was raised in Sacramento, Calif. His late mother, Samantha Lewes, divorced Tom Hanks in 1987. "I grew up like a lot of kids," Hanks said over lunch in Santa Monica. "I'm a child of divorce, which is obviously not a great thing. That's not to say I didn't see a lot of my dad."

He points out that his father wasn't always rich and famous.

"When I was a little baby, he would carry me down to the bank and cash unemployment checks. I was 15 or 16 years old by the time he started to become sort of the premiere guy. At that point, I'm not saying he wasn't a well-known guy. He was. But it wasn't until I was sort of halfway through my adolescent teenage revolt that all of a sudden things really exploded for him."

Hanks said he would hang out with his dad on movie shoots during summer vacations. The son worked as a production assistant on the set of his father's 1995 film, "Apollo 13," and in 1996 he had a cameo in his dad's directorial debut, "That Thing You Do." In 1999, he landed a regular role as Alex Whitman on the WB's teen sci-fi series "Roswell." His big break, though, came when he starred in the 2002 film "Orange County." His more recent films include Peter Jackson's "King Kong," the crime thriller "Alone With Her" and the Jack Black comedy "Tenacious D: The Pick of Destiny."

On getting career breaks, Hanks said being the son of Tom Hanks can only get you so far. "It might get you a little more attention," he said. "It might get you a meeting. But they're not going to give you a job. And the people that would, I wouldn't necessarily be wanting to do those types of movies anyway."

Said Hoblit: "Colin is a very self-contained guy. He lives in New York. He never refers to his dad except when someone brings it up. I know they spend holidays together. I don't get any sense of anger or envy. He is carving out his own world."

Occasionally, Hanks said, people will recognize him as he walks down the street, but that usually comes after one of his movies comes out. "There is a cycle for this stuff," he said. "I might get recognized for about two weeks, and then I'll fade into people's memories."

NEW

From Page 19

The VA spends about $265 million annually on programs targeting homeless veterans. And as Iraq and Afghanistan veterans face problems, the VA will not simply "wait for 10 years until they show up," Pete Dougherty, the VA's director of homeless programs, said when the new figures were released.

"We're out there now trying to get everybody we can to get those kinds of services today, so we avoid this kind of problem in the future," he said.

■ ■ ■

These are all problems defined in broad strokes, but they cascade in very real and acute ways in the lives of individual veterans.

Take Mike Lally. He thinks back now to the long stretches in the stifling Iraq heat, nothing to do but play Spades and count flies, and about the day insurgents killed the friendly shop owner who sold his battalion Pringles and candy bars.

He thinks about crouching in the back of a Humvee watching bullets crash into fuel tanks during his first firefight, and about waiting back at base for the vodka his mother sent him, dyed blue and concealed in bottles of Scope mouthwash.

It was a little maddening, he supposes, every piece of it, but Lally is fairly sure that what finally cracked him was the bodies. Unloading the dead from ambulances and loading them onto helicopters. That was his job.

"I guess I loaded at least 20," he says. "Always a couple at a time. And you knew who it was. You always knew who it was."

It was in 2004, when he came back from his second tour in Iraq with the Marine Corps, that his own bumpy ride down began.

He would wake up at night, sweating and screaming, and during the days he imagined people in the shadows—a state the professionals call hypervigilence and Mike Lally calls "being on high alert, all the time."

His father-in-law tossed him a job installing vinyl siding, but the stress overcame him, and Lally began to drink. A little rum in his morning coffee at first, and before he knew it he was drunk on the job, and then had no job at all.

And now Mike Lally, still only 26 years old, is here, booted out of his house by his wife, padding around in an old T-shirt and sweats at a Leeds shelter called Soldier On, trying to get sober and perhaps, on a day he can envision but not yet grasp, get his home and family and life back.

"I was trying to live every day in a fog," he says, reflecting between spits of tobacco juice. "I'd think I was back in there, see people popping out of windows. Any loud noise would set me off. It still does."

■ ■ ■

Soldier On is staffed entirely by homeless veterans. A handful who fought in Iraq or Afghanistan, usually six or seven at a time, mix with dozens from Vietnam. Its president, Jack Downing, has spent nearly four decades working with addicts, the homeless and the mentally ill.

Next spring, he plans to open a limited-equity cooperative in the western Massachusetts city of Pittsfield. Formerly homeless veterans will live there, with half their rents going into individual deposit accounts.

Downing is convinced that ushering homeless veterans back into homeownership is the best way out of the pattern of homelessness that has repeated itself in an endless loop, war after war.

"It's a disgrace," Downing says. "You have served your country, you get damaged, and you come back and we don't take care of you. And we make you prove that you need our services."

"And how do you prove it?" he continues, voice rising in anger. "You prove it by regularly failing until you end up in a system where you're identified as a person in crisis. That has shocked me."

Even as the nation gains a much better understanding of the types of post-traumatic stress disorders suffered by so many thousands of veterans—even as it learns the lessons of Vietnam and tries to learn the lessons of Iraq—it is probably impossible to foretell a day when young American men and women come home from wars unscarred.

At least as long as there are wars.

But Driscoll, at least, sees an opportunity to do much better.

He notes that the VA now has more than 200 veteran adjustment centers to help ease the transition back into society, and the existence of more than 900 VA-connected community clinics nationwide.

"We're hopeful that five years down the road, you're not going to see the same problems you saw after the Vietnam War," he says. "If we as a nation do the right thing by these guys."

Ledger body leaves NYC funeral home

NEW YORK (AP)—The body of Heath Ledger left the funeral home as the family prepared to bury the "Brokeback Mountain" actor Friday, the same day police insisted they have no interest in interviewing Mary-Kate Olsen.

Details about Ledger's funeral remained shrouded in secrecy. The body was moved from the police-barricaded funeral home at about 4 p.m. amid a swarm of cameras and reporters. Ledger's publicist, Mara Buxbaum, said funeral arrangements "will continue to be kept private at the family's request."

Their immediate plans were not known, though Australian Foreign Minister Stephen Smith said his government would do whatever is needed to help the family bring back Ledger's body to Australia.

Also Friday, Olsen said Ledger was a "friend" in a brief statement released Friday, her first word since the Australian-born actor's death. In its entirety, it reads: "Heath was a friend. His death is a tragic loss. My thoughts are with his family during this very difficult time."

Police said the masseuse who found Ledger's body Tuesday spent nine minutes making three calls to the Olsen twin before dialing 911 for help, then called Olsen a fourth time after paramedics arrived. At some point during the flurry of calls, Olsen, who was in California, summoned her personal security guards to the apartment to help, police said.

NYPD spokesman Paul Browne said investigators have no interest in talking to Olsen. They interviewed everyone at the scene, each of whom was cooperative. That eliminated "any need to interview Miss Olsen," he said.

Olsen's whereabouts were unknown Friday. A private viewing had been scheduled for Ledger on Friday at the Frank E. Campbell funeral home in Manhattan.

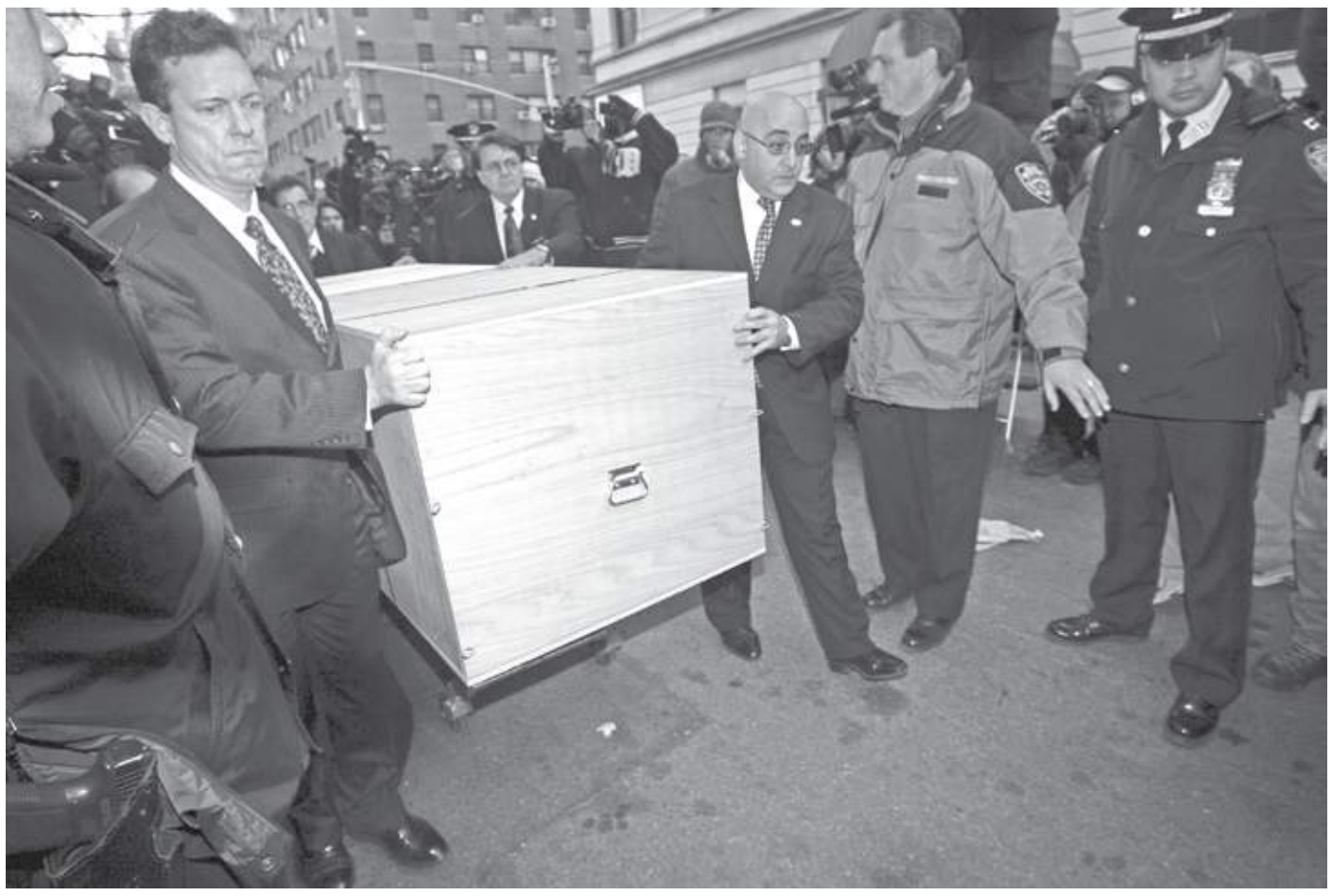
Ledger's family placed a death notice in The West Australian, a newspaper based in his hometown of Perth, remembering him as "the most amazing 'old soul' in a young man's body."

"As a close knit and very private family we have observed you so determined yet quietly traveling in your self-styled path in life, nothing would get in your way ... no mountain too tall, no river too wide," said the notice, which the newspaper said had been submitted by Ledger's relatives. ".... Our hearts are broken."

The actor's sister, Kate, said she could "hardly breathe" as she tried to write her tribute. "We were the ultimate soul mates," she said.

"You were so many things to so many people, but to me you were just my little brother."

The cause of Ledger's death will not be known for at least a week, after medical examiners complete toxicology tests. Authorities suspect a possible overdose, but nothing conclusive has been determined. Several prescription drugs were found in the Manhattan apartment where Ledger's body was found.

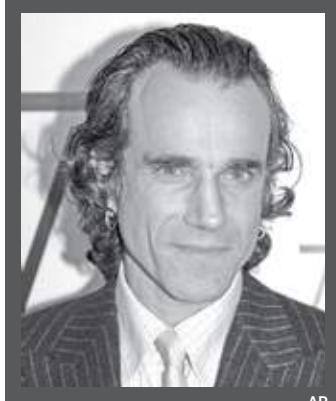


AP

The body of Heath Ledger is removed from the Frank E. Campbell funeral home in New York, Friday, Jan 25, 2008. Ledger, 28, died at his Manhattan apartment on Tuesday.

Day-Lewis emotional over Ledger's death

NEW YORK (AP)—Daniel Day-Lewis paid an emotional tribute to Heath Ledger during a taped appearance on Oprah Winfrey's talk show.



AP

Actor Daniel Day-Lewis arrives at the 33rd annual Los Angeles Film Critics Association awards in this Jan. 12, 2008, file photo in Century City, Calif.

The 50-year-old actor, who was on "The Oprah Winfrey Show" to discuss his Oscar nomination for "There Will Be Blood," said he couldn't get his mind off Ledger's sudden death.

Day-Lewis taped his appearance by satellite from Europe on Wednesday, a day after the 28-year-old actor was found dead in his Manhattan apartment.

"I feel very unsettled at the moment, and I suppose it's `cause I only just saw the news about Heath Ledger's death," said Day-Lewis, his voice quivering.

"It seems somehow strange to be talking about anything else. Not that there's anything to say really except to express one's regret and to say from the bottom of one's heart to his family and to his friends that I'm sorry for their trouble," he said.

Several prescription drugs were found in the apartment where Ledger's body was found by his masseuse.

The cause of death will not be answered for at least a week, after medical examiners complete toxicology tests. Authorities suspect a possible overdose, but nothing conclusive has been determined.

"I didn't know him," Day-Lewis said. "I have an impression, a strong impression, I would have liked him very much as a man if I had. I'd already marveled at some of his work, and had looked forward so much to seeing the work that he would do in the future."

Ledger received an Oscar nomination for his role as a gay cowboy in 2005's "Brokeback Mountain." He also appeared in "Lords of Dogtown," "The Brothers Grimm" and "The Patriot."

Sales spike for Heath Ledger films

AP

This image provided by Focus Features shows actor Heath Ledger portraying the character Ennis Del Mar in the movie "Brokeback Mountain."

NEW YORK (AP)—Heath Ledger's death has spiked sales and interest in the late actor's films.

As often happens after the death of a famous actor or musician, many have sought to revisit or simply discover his work. Three of Ledger's movies charted among the 25 best-selling DVDs on Amazon.com as of Friday afternoon.

Most have been purchasing copies of Ledger's 1999 comedy "10 Things I Hate About You" and his 2001 period action flick "A Knight's Tale." After those films, Ledger pursued more dramatic, challenging roles, with 2005's "Brokeback Mountain"—the third most popular of his DVDs on Amazon—being roundly considered his finest achievement.

The 28-year-old Australia native died Tuesday in a Manhattan apartment. Toxicology tests to determine the cause of death will not be completed for at least a week.

Ledger's latest film to be released, the multi-persona Bob Dylan film "I'm Not There," has mostly completed its theatrical run. It played in only 61 theaters last weekend.

The lone theater it remains playing at in New York is the Film Forum, an art house and repertory theater that has been screening "I'm Not There" since it was released in November.

"The film is doing very well and as long as it does well, we'll play it," said Film Forum first-run programmer Karen Cooper. "I don't imagine that it's going to do better because of his loss. I think it's doing as well as it is because it's a very strong and interesting and unusual film."

The impact of Ledger's death on his last completed project, "The Dark Knight," remains to be seen. The latest installment in the "Batman" series, Ledger plays the Joker, and his dark, twisted take on the villain had been a focal point in the film's advance promotion.

Since Ledger's death, over seven million have flocked to YouTube to watch trailers of "The Dark Knight." Over one million have watched a clip of an interview where Ledger discusses the Joker role.

Warner Bros., the studio distributing "The Dark Knight," has not yet announced any change in schedule for the film, which is planned for a blockbuster summer release on July 18.

"Certainly 'The Dark Knight' is one of the most anticipated films of the year," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box office tracker Media By Numbers. "I think Warners is just going to stay the course and keep marketing the film."

As for its box office performance, Dergarabedian suspects the film is so big that it "kind of transcends almost anything like this that might happen." He adds that the film's release will to a certain degree honor Ledger, whose performance was already expected to impress moviegoers.

At the time of his death, Ledger was in the midst of shooting "The Imaginarium of Dr. Parnassus," a $30 million film directed by Terry Gilliam. The movie recently completed shooting scenes in London and was soon to resume production in Vancouver, British Columbia. Producers have not said whether the film will continue or not.

In the film, Ledger was to co-star with Christopher Plummer, Lily Cole and Tom Waits. Options open to producers—depending upon how many scenes Ledger had left to shoot—include recasting (and thus reshooting) his part, finishing it with the help of a body double (as was done after Brandon Lee died while making 1994's "The Crow") or simply canning production.

Ledger had also been preparing to make his feature directing debut by adapting Walter Tevis' novel "The Queen's Gambit."

In an interview last month with Variety, Gilliam told the trade paper: "Heath is extraordinary. He's just so good, and he's going to be a film director. He's watching everything, and he's going to be a much better director than I will ever be."

Johansson: I'm in love with Obama!

NEW YORK (AP)—Scarlett Johansson returned from the Persian Gulf with a whole lot of soldiers' trinkets and a delusion of her own engagement—to Barack Obama.

"I am engaged ... to Barack Obama," Johansson joked in an interview with The Associated Press on Thursday. "My heart belongs to Barack, and that is who I am currently, finally, engaged to. Yes."

Johansson, who showed her support for the Democratic presidential candidate at the Iowa caucus earlier this month, was really just deflecting a question about rumors she might be engaged (to actor-beau Ryan Reynolds).

The 23-year-old actress talked about the warm welcome she received while visiting troops stationed in the Persian Gulf last week. Johansson dropped by U.S. bases in Kuwait on Jan. 17 and Jan. 18 as part of a USO tour in which she met about 3,500 men and women in uniform.

"Everybody that I met there was so incredibly friendly and polite and genuine and generous," she said. "They were so, so sweet. I mean, I was just amazed."

Johansson said some people ripped patches off their jackets as gifts and handed her challenge coins from their military units. One Marine offered up his St. Christopher medal. Another starstruck guy gushed: "You made my whole deployment!"

Johansson has a full plate for 2008, with the release of films including "The Other Boleyn Girl" and "He's Just Not That Into You," as well as the arrival of her debut album on May 20.

The disc, called "Anywhere I Lay My Head," features Tom Waits cover songs and one original track. "It was a really, really sort of inspired process to make this CD, and it was something I'd never done before," said Johansson, who said the album has a dreamy, ethereal quality.

On a far more serious note: Johansson was still speechless Thursday over the death of fellow actor Heath Ledger, who was found dead Tuesday in his Manhattan apartment.

"I'm really just so very shocked," she said. "He was an incredibly sweet, kindhearted and enthusiastic person. And, you know, he loved his daughter—I mean, that was like the light of his life. It's just a terrible loss."

AP

Actress Scarlett Johansson is shown in Los Angeles in this Oct. 15, 2007, file photo.

SAG Awards provide glamour amid strike

LOS ANGELES (AP)—It's usually a familiar sight during Hollywood's awards season: miles of red carpet dotted with scores of superstars in their finest designer duds.

But with the Golden Globes reduced to a press conference and the fate of the Oscars still in question, Sunday's Screen Actors Guild Awards will bring the first - and possibly only - dose of Tinseltown glamour for an industry subdued by the writers strike.

"We're the only big-time televised awards show on TV this year, so we'll get a lot of viewers," said SAG President Alan Rosenberg. "It's kind of a bittersweet thing. Nobody wants to be in the position we're in."

Members of the actors union have stood in solidarity with striking writers since their walkout Nov. 5. The writers union granted a waiver for the 14th annual Screen Actors Guild Awards, allowing the show to go on without pickets and with union writers and the typical awards-show trappings. Writers denied waivers for the Globes and the Academy Awards.

While SAG's waiver was granted just last month, preparations for Sunday's show have been in the works for more than a year, said producer Kathy Connell. Organizers upped the glam factor this time - not because of the strike-forced scaling-down of other kudos ceremonies, but because the show coincides with the union's 75th anniversary.

"We're going to be talking about what the guild has been through over the past 75 years," which includes strikes, she said.

"New technology is not that new," she continued. "New technology started with talkies. It started with television. It started with commercials. Now it's going to the Internet."

Studios and striking writers have been fighting over compensation for projects distributed online. Shares of Internet profits will also be central to actors' demands when their contract expires in June, Rosenberg said.

But for now, TV and film stars are excited for one of their first opportunities of the season to mingle with their colleagues and honor the year's best performances, said SAG Awards nominee Jon Tenney of TV's "The Closer." About 100,000 union members voted for winners in 13 categories.

"It's actors supporting actors. ... There's a real sense of community," Tenney said. "Obviously we're really grateful that WGA gave us a waiver."

Work began last week to transform the Shrine Auditorium into an art-deco dinner theater for the festivities. Beneath uncharacteristically stormy skies Thursday, workers installed carpet, hung curtains and prepared the place for its A-list attendees. (Because of the possibility of inclement weather Sunday, the red carpet area will have a tent, as will bleachers for fans.)

AP

Stephen Colbert's portrait was hung Wednesday at the Smithsonian Institution's National Portrait Gallery in Washington for a six-week showing.

Colbert portrait hangs at Smithsonian

WASHINGTON (AP)—Stephen Colbert was denied when he tried to run for president this year in South Carolina. Now the fake TV pundit is getting some love from the city of his birth.

His portrait was hung Wednesday at the Smithsonian Institution's National Portrait Gallery in Washington for a six-week showing in what the museum considers an "appropriate place"—right between the bathrooms near the "America's Presidents" exhibit. Museum officials stress it's only temporary.

"We agreed to go along with the joke and hang it for a short time in between the bathrooms," said museum spokeswoman Bethany Bentley. "Let me tell you two key things here: His portrait is not coming into the collection, and it's not hanging permanently."

That may come as a surprise to Colbert, who has campaigned for the honor and boasted on his Comedy Central show Tuesday night that his portrait was "hanging in the hall of presidents, just a few yards from the father of our country—exactly where I believe it belongs."

Colbert, who plays a pompous conservative talk-show host on "The Colbert Report" and recently tried to run for president as a Democrat, went to great lengths to persuade Smithsonian Institution officials he was worthy.

The portrait—actually three portraits in one—depicts a debonair Colbert standing at a fireplace in front of a similar portrait of himself posing in front of the same mantel with a third picture of himself.

After the work was rejected by the National Museum of American History, Colbert eventually made his way to the portrait gallery. Bentley said Colbert wasn't begging so much as "making his case." She said they welcome the conversation about whose portraits are included in the gallery's collection. It was just not Colbert's time, she said.

"Who's the competition? Who do I need to knock out of here to get me up?" Colbert asked gallery director Marc Pachter.

Colbert argued he was more deserving than athletes Lance Armstrong or Andre Agassi and pulled out his Hacky Sack for a few kicks in the art gallery to prove it. "You do realize I'm in big trouble if you hit any of these portraits," Pachter said.

Still, Colbert said he thinks his "sack work" ultimately won Pachter over for the temporary display.

"I don't mean to brag, but as it contains three portraits, my portrait has more portraits than any other portrait in the National Portrait Gallery," he said, adding, "All Employees must wash hands before returning to work."

Word of his portrait at the gallery spread quickly among loyal fans.

Unique Bexley, 20, and Jacqueline Canales, 19, both of Washington, said they talked on the telephone after watching the show Tuesday and decided they had to go to the portrait gallery.

Ex-cop: Diana rejected security

LONDON (AP)—A former London police chief said that Princess Diana would not have died in Paris if she had been willing to accept protection from British officers.

In turn, he was accused by a lawyer of being part of a conspiracy to cover up the murder of the princess and her boyfriend, Dodi Fayed.

"I totally refute it as a blatant lie," said Lord Paul Condon, who headed London's Metropolitan Police from 1993 through 1999.

Condon said he pleaded with Diana to reverse her decision in December 1993 to dispense with Royal Protection officers.

Those officers continued to accompany her only when she traveled with her sons, Prince William and Prince Harry.

"Let me be absolutely frank. If, as was my wish, she would have had police protection in Paris, then I'm absolutely convinced those three lives would not have been tragically lost," Condon told a coroner's inquest.

Diana, boyfriend Dodi Fayed and driver Henri Paul all died in the crash in a Paris road tunnel on Aug. 31, 1997.

Fayed's father, Mohamed Al Fayed, has alleged that the couple were murdered in a plot led by Prince Philip, the husband of Queen Elizabeth II.

British and French police blame the crash on the driver, saying he was over the legal limit for alcohol.

Michael Mansfield, a lawyer for al Fayed, suggested that after Diana's death, Condon had suppressed information about her fears of dying in an arranged car crash.

"You were sitting on it knowing that something had gone wrong in Paris linked to the work of British state agencies," Mansfield said.

"You are suggesting, are you, that Lord Condon was part of a criminal conspiracy?" asked the coroner, Lord Justice Scott Baker.

"Yes," Mansfield said.

"What you are suggesting, I find—and I respect why you are saying it, sir, because that's what you are paid to do and that is what your client wishes you to do—but I find the suggestion ... totally abhorrent, offensive and would actually mean that I am a murderer or, in essence, part of a murderous conspiracy," Condon said.

"My whole life has been committed to telling the truth in these sort of issues and I can swear on oath to the jury that is a blatant lie," Condon added.

Condon said there were several meetings about Diana's security in December 1993 and January 1994.

Stallone: HGH use is 'nothing'

NEW YORK (AP)—Sylvester Stallone says he used human growth hormone to get buff for the new "Rambo" movie, and defends its use.

"HGH (human growth hormone) is nothing," the 61-year-old actor tells Time magazine in its Feb. 4 issue. "Anyone who calls it a steroid is grossly misinformed."

Because it is nearly indetectable, HGH has become a substance of great concern in major league baseball and other sports battling allegations of rampant doping.

"Testosterone to me is so important for a sense of well-being when you get older," he says. "Everyone over 40 years old would be wise to investigate it because it increases the quality of your life. Mark my words. In 10 years it will be over the counter."

Stallone directed and co-wrote the new "Rambo" sequel, which arrived in theaters Wednesday.

Actor Chuck Norris is shown his Lone Wolf Ranch in Texas in this Jan. 20, 2008, file photo.

AP

Chuck Norris charity cheat: I'm guilty

HOUSTON (AP)—The former chief executive of Chuck Norris' martial arts program for inner-city children has pleaded guilty to stealing from the charity, the U.S. Attorney's office said.

James D. Brasher, 47, pleaded guilty on Thursday to one count of uttering a forged security, the office said in a statement.

Brasher confessed to opening bank accounts in names similar to that of Norris' Kick Drugs Out of America Foundation. He then fraudulently endorsed checks sent to the foundation and deposited them into his own accounts, using the money to pay his debts and living expenses.

He admitted taking at least $130,000, DeGabrielle said.

Brasher is set to be sentenced in April. He faces up to 10 years in prison, a fine of $250,000 and a three-year-term of supervised release.

Norris established the foundation, nicknamed Kickstart, in 1990 to use martial arts to help children avoid the temptations of gangs and drugs. According to the charity's Web site, Kickstart serves 5,000 youngsters in 38 schools in the Houston and Dallas areas.

Spears' driver license case continued

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Britney Spears' lawyer won more time Friday to work on the pop star's case in which she is charged with driving without a valid license.

Attorney Michael Flanagan appeared with prosecutor Michael Amerian before a judge and said they had been unable to agree on what law applies. They asked for more time and were given until Feb. 20.

But Superior Court Judge T.K. Herman said that he was not going to grant any more delays after that, and if the parties could not agree he would order a trial. "It's this court's intention to force both sides to go to trial within 30 days of that date," he said.

The case stems from an August incident in which Spears was videotaped as she bumped another vehicle while parking her Mercedes-Benz. She left after looking over the damage from the fender-bender.

The owner of the other vehicle later filed a police report and Spears was charged in September with misdemeanor hit-and-run and driving without a valid license. The hit-and-run charges were dismissed in October after Spears paid an undisclosed sum to the owner.

Flanagan said outside court that Spears was driving with a Louisiana license that was valid because she owns homes in that state. But he said that when a person is "domiciled" in California they are required to get a California license and that Spears did so within a week after the charges were filed.

"There's no dispute about the facts here," he said. "The dispute is about what the law is that's appropriate to the facts."

AP

Britney Spears arrives for the grand opening party of LAX nightclub at the Luxor hotel-casino in Las Vegas, in a Sept. 1, 2007 file photo.

Felony charges filed against Lil Wayne

YUMA, Ariz. (AP)—The Yuma County Attorney's Office filed felony drug and weapons charges Friday against Lil Wayne.

The 25-year-old rapper, whose real name is Dwayne Michael Carter Jr., was charged in justice court in Wellton, Ariz., with one count each of possession of a narcotic drug for sale, possession of dangerous drugs, misconduct involving weapons and one count of possession of drug paraphernalia.

AP

Rapper Lil' Wayne is photographed in New York in this April 26, 2006, file photo.

He is scheduled to appear Feb. 12 at a preliminary hearing.

Carter was in court, where a judge lifted a bail restriction prohibiting him from leaving the state. He was arrested after his tour bus was stopped in southern Arizona late Tuesday and is free on bail.

Carter's lawyer, James Tilson, said his client was mostly staying positive, adding: "He is very concerned about the charges."

Free to travel outside Arizona until his next hearing, Carter was on his way to perform in Richmond, Va., Friday night.

"He absolutely will be present at his next court date," Tilson said.

Carter's bus was stopped at a U.S. Border Patrol checkpoint near Dateland, Ariz., 78 miles east of Yuma. He was traveling with 11 other people.

Ramona Sanchez, a spokeswoman for the Drug Enforcement Administration, said earlier that a Border Patrol canine unit alerted agents to the presence of illegal drugs on the bus.

Prosecution rests in Snipes trial

OCALA, Fla. (AP)—The prosecution in the tax evasion trial of Wesley Snipes rested Friday, clearing the way next week for the defense and its potential list of celebrity witnesses, including Snipes himself.

The final prosecution witness, Internal Revenue Service agent Steward Stich, showed Friday that the actor earned almost $38 million in the years he failed to file federal income tax returns, 1999 to 2004.

Snipes is charged with tax fraud, conspiracy and willful failure to file tax returns, which could bring up to 16 years in prison.

Co-defendants Eddie Ray Kahn, founder of the tax protest groups American Rights Litigators and Guiding Light of God Ministries, and Douglas P. Rosile, who allegedly prepared Snipes' false documents, face up to 10 years.

Prosecutors say Snipes paid taxes in the '90s, but changed his mind after meeting Kahn in 2000. He allegedly stopped filing returns, illegally sought $11 million in 1996 and 1997 taxes paid and drew fake checks to pay the U.S. Treasury.

The celebrity witnesses who could take the stand include Sylvester Stallone, Muhammad Ali, Spike Lee and Tom Brokaw. All were former clients of the New York-based Starr and Co. that handled Snipes' taxes before the actor met his co-defendants.

Snipes' lawyer, Robert Barnes, said they could testify that the firm "gave bad advice to many people."

Friends rally to help cancer patient and pay for privilege

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DearAbby

DEAR ABBY: A friend was diagnosed with cancer. A single woman living alone, she rallied a group of co-workers, friends and neighbors to donate their time to help her with a variety of tasks. These included driving her back and forth to chemo and doctor appointments, fixing meals, cleaning her house (she has OCD and was super-picky about every detail -- including cleaning the cat box), sleeping over to make sure she was OK (we had only a lumpy couch because she refused to set up a bed in one of her two vacant bedrooms!) and handling a variety of other tasks.

I was one of the many who donated time, energy and vacation days from work to help her.

After her chemo treatments were over, she invited all of her "caregivers" to an inexpensive neighborhood restaurant for dinner as a thank-you gesture. At the end of the meal, everyone was asked to pay for our dinner and drinks! The restaurant bill came to around $250.

Abby, this woman holds a high-level, well-paying job and was receiving a regular paycheck during her illness. If not for the generosity of many people, she would have had to pay no less than $25 an hour for months of "personal care." I think she should have paid for our dinner as a small token of her gratitude. What's your opinion?

USED UP IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR USED UP: My opinion is the same as yours. But look at it this way: She could have "invited you" to an expensive restaurant. Give her credit for being a talented organizer as well as an ingrate.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I am a young woman, happily in love with a young man, "Travis." We have been dating for more than two years and hope to become engaged. But we're unwilling to take the next step without the blessing of my parents, and for a number of reasons, they're not ready to see us become engaged at this time.

In the meantime, Trav and I are constantly confronted by people who are eager to see us tie the knot. I wish I had a dime for every person who has asked, "So, where's the ring?" or, "Why don't you just elope?" We used to try explaining that we're waiting for my parents' blessing (and for Travis to finish college), but nobody seems satisfied with our reasons for waiting. I respect my parents' opinion, and do not feel I must defend it to others.

Trav is uncomfortable with the questions, too. He thinks we should tell people we're "just friends," but I don't believe we should hide our relationship just because someone is nosy.

Being rude is not in my personality, so I need a polite way to tell people to mind their own business.

SEARCHING FOR THE RIGHT WORDS

DEAR SEARCHING: Smile and say, "We'll set a date when we're ready, and we're not ready yet." Then change the subject.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Is it possible for a wife of eight years to have a baby from another man and three "flings" after that, and still say she loves her husband? This is killing me.

BROKEN-HEARTED IN WASHINGTON

DEAR BROKEN-HEARTED: It's possible, if the wife is a sex addict who can't control her behavior. More important is how you feel about her, because you would have to be a masochist to allow the situation to continue unless she gets some much-needed help.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." To order, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

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Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

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Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, Saipan Tribune reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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---

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2 BEAUTICIAN (SUN 1534)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; workers compensation & medical. Contact: Magdalena Orbino dba Janine Beauty Shop @233-1041.

1 WAITER (SUN 1535)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Pacific Resort Service Inc. dba ESY Kitchen @233-3550.

1 INSTRUCTOR (JAPANESE LANGUAGE) (SUN 1536)
Salary:$5.00/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; employee to provide own food; workmen's compensation insurance & medical expense. Contact: Nippon Pacific Resource Center, Inc. @234-7220.

1 COMPUTER TECHNICIAN (SUN 1537)
Salary:$4.50/hour. Benefits: Employer provided housing; self provided food; workmen compensation & medical insurance. Contact: Pacific Blue Corporation dba PC Outlet CNMI @233-0168.

1 TEACHER (SUN 1538)
Salary:$2,983.33/monthly. Benefits: Workers compensation & health insurance. Contact: Saipan International School @288-9660.

1 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (SUN 1539)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation. Contact: ILC Corporation dba Ladera Int'l School of Saipan @288-2006.

1 COLLECTOR (SUN 1540)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; workmen's compensation/Alien medical. Contact: United Pacific Collection Agency @235-2000.

1 MECHANIC (SUN 1541)
Salary:$3.05-$5.27/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation insurance. Contact: Pacific Marine & Industrial Corporation @322-6181.

1 LOGISTICS SUPERINTENDENT (SUN 1542)
Salary:$3.05-$5.38/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation insurance. Contact: Pacific Marine & Industrial Corporation @322-6181.

1 OPERATIONS MANAGER (SUN 1543)
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1 HOUSEWORKER (SUN 1544)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Free housing; free food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Victor S. Lifoifoi @287-5436.

1 SALES SUPERVISOR (SUN 1545)
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1 MANAGER, (TOUR SALES) (SUN 1546)
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1 COOK (SUN 1550)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Free housing; free food; workmen's compensation & medical are free. Contact: RDA Enterprise, Inc. dba Mary's Bakery @234-6694.

5 BAKER (SUN 1551)
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235-NEWS

Djokovic upends Federer at Australian

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Roger Federer is the first to admit he pays a steep price for all his success. One by one, players try to knock him off, and with each match and each victory expectations grow.

"Of course, I've created a monster," he said. "So I know I need to always win every tournament."

For one rare night, the monster was tamed.

Federer lost to Novak Djokovic 7-5, 6-3, 7-6 (5) Friday in the Australian Open semifinals, leaving the top-ranked Swiss one match short of making an 11th consecutive Grand Slam final.

"Winning every other week, you know, lose a set and people say I'm playing bad," Federer said. "So it's my own mistake, I guess."

Djokovic will now play unseeded Frenchman Jo-Wilfried Tsonga on Sunday, setting up one unlikely title match. The women settle their championship Saturday when Maria Sharapova faces Ana Ivanovic.

Djokovic was 1-6 against Federer going into the match, losing most recently in the U.S. Open final. Federer was in his 15th straight Grand Slam semifinal.

"I am just very amazed I coped with the pressure today," Djokovic said. "In the most important moments, I played my best tennis. It's just amazing, indescribable, to beat the No. 1 player of the world, one of the best players this sport has ever had, in straight sets."

Rafael Nadal, the only player to beat Federer in the previous 10 majors, was thumped 6-2, 6-3, 6-2 by Tsonga, whose looks have been likened to Muhammad Ali's and his game with Yannick Noah's.

Djokovic, seeded third, will be a big favorite Sunday after making the semifinals at four straight majors and having been to the U.S. Open final. Tsonga is in his fifth Grand Slam and past the fourth round for the first time.

Djokovic said he drew on his experience in his U.S. Open final loss to Federer, knowing the pressure was mounting on his rival after such an imperious run.

"As one of the top players in the world, you always have a lot of expectations and a lot of pressure on your back," Djokovic said. "He's a special case because he's expected to win everywhere he goes on any surface."

AP

Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates after beating Switzerland's Roger Federer during their Men's singles semi final at the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne, Australia, Friday, Jan. 25, 2008.

Djokovic went out with the same intent against Federer that Tsonga had against Nadal. The loss for Nadal was his worst since the 2004 U.S. Open—Federer's was his worst since the 2004 French Open.

Federer had the chance to serve for the first set at 5-3, but missed. His missed some touch volleys and he missed some forehands that usually are his trademark.

Djokovic broke twice to win that set and twice more to get to 5-1 in the second in an 11-game sequence that changed the match.

"I was able to deal with the pressure in the best possible way. And if you do that against the best player in the world, you should get the positive outcome," Djokovic said. "I'm very happy that in crucial moments my serve was serving me, and it was probably my best element in the game."

The 20-year-old Serb said it's important for tennis to shake things up.

"The dominance of Federer and Nadal was just amazing the last couple of years," he said. "So I think it's great for tennis lovers all around the world to see something new."

Federer's last straight-sets losses at the Australian Open were in the first rounds in both 2000 and 2001 to Arnaud Clement. Clement and fellow Frenchman Michael Llodra are in the doubles final Saturday against Israelis Jonathan Erlich and Andy Ram.

That doubles final follows the women's championship between No. 5 Sharapova and No. 4 Ivanovic, Djokovic's Serbian compatriot.

Sharapova, who lost last year's final 6-1, 6-2 to Serena Williams, is favored to win a third Grand Slam title. She has not dropped a set in six wins, including a quarterfinal victory that ended top-ranked Justine Henin's 32-match winning streak and a semifinal against No. 3 Jelena Jankovic.

Ivanovic is in her second final in four majors after a three-set win over Daniela Hantuchova, when she rallied after losing the first eight games.

The women's doubles champions were crowned Friday when Ukrainian sisters Alona and Kateryna Bondarenko downed Victoria Azarenka and Shahar Peer a 2-6, 6-1, 6-4.

Federer had been seeking his third consecutive Australian title. A victory would have pulled him within one championship of Pete Sampras' record of 14 majors.

His preparation was hampered by a stomach illness that forced him out of his regular tuneup at the Kooyong exhibition event, and he never appeared at his authoritative best.

He was taken to 10-8 in the fifth set but was able to survive the third round over another Serb, Janko Tipsarevic.

But Djokovic—1-6 against Federer coming into the match—never let the Swiss get settled. He reeled off 13 aces and 50 winners and held serve when a break would have changed momentum.

Not holding serve for the first set "cost me the match," Federer said.

"You can't always play your best," Federer said. "I've won, many, many times when I didn't expect myself to win. So tonight is one of those nights where you're a little bit disappointed. But it's going to go over and I'm going to look forward to the rest of the year."

Federer rubbed his eyes frequently and was subdued in his news conference.

"There is no doubt I have played better before," he said.

Djokovic said he knows he's expected to win the final, based on experience and rankings. Tsonga was ranked No. 43 at the end of last year.

"Tsonga is coming up," he said. "He's just an amazing athlete and has been performing some impressive tennis in these two weeks, as I did. I didn't lose even a set here in Australian Open, which is amazing. Obviously, we will not have anything to lose. It's finals, so anything can happen."

3 Giants out with illness

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP)—New York Giants starting fullback Madison Hedgecock and two others missed practice Friday because of illness.

Rookie safety Michael Johnson and defensive tackle Manny Wright also missed the team's next-to-last workout before leaving Monday for the Super Bowl in Glendale, Ariz.

"They all have whatever is going around, the high temperature and that kind of thing," coach Tom Coughlin said.

Starting left guard Rich Seubert (knee) and backup cornerback Kevin Dockery (hip) missed their second straight day of practice with injuries.

Seubert sprained his right knee in the NFC title game in Green Bay on Sunday, but has vowed to play.

Dockery has been sidelined the last two playoffs games after aggravating a hip flexor injury in the wild-card win over Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

"The last two weeks have been very tough," Dockery said. "I'm getting closer, though."

Meanwhile, middle linebacker Antonio Pierce is ignoring all the hoopla surrounding Patriots quarterback Tom Brady and his right foot.

Brady was photographed in New York on Monday wearing a protective boot. He reportedly has a minor high ankle sprain that isn't expected to keep him out of the Super Bowl on Feb. 3.

"I don't believe the ankle injury for one, so I am not really concerned about that at all," Pierce said. "Now if the guy had a sling on and some crutches and a cast and all that, then I might consider it. We expect the Tom Brady to come out that was the MVP of the league, that put up one of the best seasons all-time for a quarterback this year, and that is what we expect. ... We expect the best from Tom Brady."

Brady no-show in locker room

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. (AP)—For the second consecutive day, Patriots quarterback Tom Brady wasn't in the locker room or at practice when reporters and cameramen were allowed inside Friday.

During the 45-minute period in the locker room, several cameramen lingered near his locker, but he didn't show up. Nor was he there for the first 12 minutes of practice that the media were allowed to watch.

New England coach Bill Belichick said reporters would be informed after practice if Brady participated. There was no word after it ended, and calls to the Patriots were not immediately returned.

Brady was photographed in New York on Monday wearing a protective boot on his right foot. He took it off later in the day and hasn't been photographed wearing it since. He reportedly has a minor high ankle sprain that isn't expected to keep him out of the Super Bowl against the New York Giants on Feb. 3.

Brady wasn't seen during the first 15 minutes of Thursday's workout to which media were admitted, nor in the locker room.

As Belichick was asked Friday to compare the current trip to the Super Bowl to the other three the team has played in, vice president of media relations Stacey James said, "Final question."

One reporter tried to squeeze in another, asking if Belichick could say what Brady did or didn't do on Thursday, the Patriots' first day of practice after a three-day break.

"Was that the last question?" Belichick said, smiling as he turned toward James.

"That was the last question," James replied.

With that, Belichick walked from the podium and out of the room.

About 90 minutes later, Belichick started practice in the team's indoor facility, watching the players stretch and stopping to talk to linebacker Junior Seau for several minutes. Safety Rodney Harrison, who was not seen at the beginning of practice on Thursday, was there Friday while reporters were allowed to observe.

But Brady was missing.

When drills began and receivers ran pass routes, it was backup Matt Cassel throwing to Randy Moss and No. 3 quarterback Matt Gutierrez passing the ball to Wes Welker.

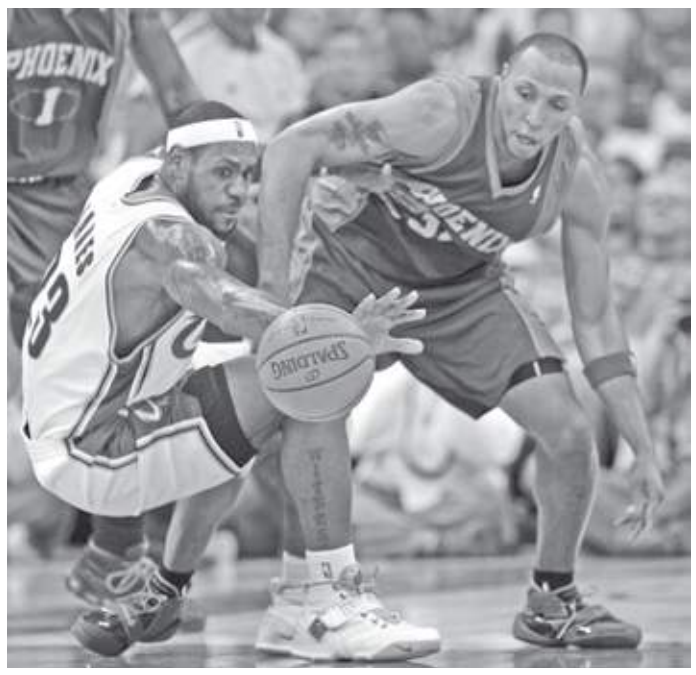
Buzzer-beater lifts Suns over Cavs

CLEVELAND—Shawn Marion dropped in a baseline floater with 1.1 seconds left for his only field goal and the Phoenix Suns burned Cleveland with a season-high 17 3-pointers in a 110-108 over the Cavaliers on Friday night.

Marion was 0-for-3 from the floor before he took a pass in the corner, dribbled past a defender, and as LeBron James came toward him, arched in his shot on the run to put the Suns ahead.

Raja Bell scored 27 points, Steve Nash had 26—21 on 3-pointers—and Amare Stoudemire 22 as the Suns improved to 17-2 against Eastern Conference teams. Phoenix went 17-of-33 on 3-pointers.

James scored 36 points, Larry Hughes added 25 points and Zydrunas Ilgauskas 21 for Cleveland.



AP

Cleveland Cavaliers' LeBron James, left, and Phoenix Suns' Shawn Marion chase down a loose ball during the fourth quarter of the Suns' 110-108 win in an NBA basketball game Friday, Jan. 25, 2008, in Cleveland.

Celtics 87, Timberwolves 86

Kendrick Perkins scored on a putback with 16.6 seconds left, and Kevin Garnett poked the ball away from Sebastian Telfair as time expired to give Boston the win.

Pistons 101, Magic 93

Richard Hamilton scored 32 points and Rasheed Wallace had 13 of his 15 in the first quarter as Detroit built a big lead and coasted past Orlando.

Hornets 111, Clippers 92

Peja Stojakovic hit six 3-pointers and scored 26 points and the Hornets won their seventh straight game.

Mavericks 112, Lakers 105

Josh Howard had 26 points and played tough defense on Kobe Bryant during a game-changing third quarter, and Dallas then held off a furious finish by Bryant.

Rockets 89, Trail Blazers 79

Tracy McGrady had 15 points, Carl Landry added 12 points and eight rebounds and Houston snapped Portland's 12-game home winning streak.

Jazz 127, Kings 113

Carlos Boozer made his first 13 shots and finished with 33 points to lead Utah over Sacramento.

Nuggets 100, Nets 85

Allen Iverson scored 30 points, Linas Kleiza added 23 and Denver extended New Jersey's losing streak to eight games.

Raptors 106, Bucks 75

Chris Bosh scored 32 points, Carlos Delfino added 18 and Toronto buried Milwaukee with a 19-0 run in the third quarter.

Bobcats 90, Bulls 77

Emeka Okafor scored 21 points and had 16 rebounds and Gerald Wallace added 21 points to help Charlotte beat injury-depleted Chicago.

Wizards 104, Grizzlies 93

Antawn Jamison had 24 points and 12 rebounds and the Wizards rebounded from their worst defeat in more than six years to beat Memphis.

Knicks 89, 76ers 81

Zach Randolph had 16 points and 15 rebounds to help New York beat Philadelphia for the first time in five meetings.

Hawks 99, SuperSonics 90

Marvin Williams scored a career-high 33 points and Atlanta extended Seattle's losing streak to a franchise-record tying 13 games.

Woods builds 4-shot lead

SAN DIEGO (AP)—Tiger Woods made short work of the easier North course Friday at Torrey Pines, leaving everyone else long odds of catching him at the Buick Invitational.

Woods chipped in for par, escaped from a couple of trees and wound up with a 7-under 65 to match his best start ever at Torrey Pines Golf Course, building a four-shot lead over alternate Kevin Streelman as he tries to win this event for the fourth straight year.

"If they handed out the trophy today, then it would be over and no big deal," said Woods, who was at 12-under 132. "But since we have so many more holes to play ... as you've seen on tour, anything can happen."

Streelman, a 29-year-old rookie who made it through all three stages of qualifying school, was third alternate Thursday morning and was not expecting to play until someone tapped him on the shoulder to say he had four minutes to get to the tee when Matthew Goggin withdrew.

Moments earlier, Streelman had his head down hitting a few putts when he looked up and saw Woods for the first time.

"Boom! He was right there in front of me," Streelman said. "I was kind of awestruck for a second and I said, 'Wow, I guess I am on the PGA Tour. It was pretty cool."

But he still hasn't met him.

"I was too scared to do that," Streelman said, smiling.

Two days of solid play means introductions will be in order Saturday morning on the first tee. Streelman followed his opening 67 with a 69 on the tougher South Course, which will host the U.S. Open this summer, and will be in the final group with Woods.

The world's No. 1 player said he had never heard of Streelman, and when told that he was No. 1,354 in the world ranking, Woods replied, "I think he might be going up."

Joining them will be Stewart Cink, who shot a 69 on the South and was another shot back at 7-under 137.

MARVELOUS

From Page 28

set, with Ivanovic particularly shaky, committing 19 unforced errors to just six winners.

Serving at 2-2, Ivanovic set up double break point with a double fault, then sent a forehand long.

After holding serve the first three times at love, Sharapova returned the favor, committing three double faults while serving at 4-3, the last two at deuce to hand the game to Ivanovic.

But she shrugged off the setback, running off the last three games, breaking to go ahead 6-5, then pumping her fist and shouting "Go Maria. Come on!" Taking every second possible between points, Sharapova then held at love. From 3-3 in the second set, Sharapova ran off the last three games again, breaking Ivanovic twice.

Ivanovic is projected to rise to No. 2 in the rankings despite the loss, while Sharapova will remain at No. 5 when the new list is released next week.

Sharapova now leads their head-to-heads 3-2, with all matches decided in straight sets. And she avenged her lopsided loss to Serbian player in the French Open semifinals last year during a period when she struggled with a shoulder injury.

LEADERS

From Page 28

and Jeff combination of Edmark Mendoza and Bernard Aquino, while PIC is expected to draw strength from its powerful frontline of Richard Pambid and Derrick Tudela as well as shooters Raymond Tolentino and James Abuy.

The 2007-2008 season of the HANMI Cup is sponsored bt Titans Chivas Life, Pacific Telecom, Inc., Coca-Cola Bottlers Micronesia, and Western Sales Trading Company.

League coordinator Lito Espino said each best player of the game has received a Chivas Life bag, PTI phone card, and gift pack courtesy of Coca-Cola.

The league is sanctioned by the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands and is organized by the Northern Marianas Bartenders Association.

In the championship game of the inaugural season held last March 4, Aqua Resort had to sweat it out before completing a perfect season when forward Eric Dalangin scored on a prayer to allow the Achugao establishment to escape Hyatt, 65-63.

For more information about the ongoing league involving the top names of the islands' hospitality industry, call Espino at 323-1135.

SUPER

From Page 28

the poor boy's head in the water until the campus police arrived. Moral of that story: do not steal Jabar Gaffney's bike. Not sure that's reason to cheer for him.

Most football fans have lost their favorite team along the way to the Super Bowl. I lost Tampa Bay. Last weekend I was cheering for the Packers and Chargers, hoping to see Bret Favre in the Super Bowl, a player I truly admire. Instead I get to see Rodney Harrison who missed the first four games of this season due to a positive steroid test.

Unless I want to watch the Super Bowl stone-faced, innocuous to the emotions, I need to pick a team I can cheer for. I have two choices 1) root for the Patriots to complete a perfect season and reach the pinnacle of success, which is what all athletes and teams strive for, an achievement for all time that I can say by watching it I was part of the moment, or 2) root for the underdog Giants.

Dogs it is.

In 1972 my favorite team was the Miami Dolphins. That season as a student in dire need of money, I volunteered for a medical experiment that required a two-day stay in a hospital room during Christmas break. Miami was in a playoff game on television when I got a shot in the hip (placebo, it turned out to be). The doctor told me to walk around to spread the injection but Dolphin Fan lay down on bed to watch the game. When I got up at halftime to go to the bathroom, I felt it had stiffened. The next day when I checked out I could hardly walk. I had ridden my bike there but couldn't even bend my leg to climb on it to ride back. Gainesville was freezing and I was three miles from home. My roommates and everyone else I knew who could give me a ride had left town. I had $2 in my pocket and called for a cab. The $2 sign popped up on the meter when I was still a block away from my house. I told the driver this is where I wanted to go, gave him all my money and limped down the street to home. When I opened the door, the wretched odor of day old dog poop about knocked me down. My roommates had locked the dog in the house for the weekend. I stepped around the piles hoping not to fall, and made it to my room where I had fortunately kept the door closed. I lay down knowing that some time I would have to get back up and outside my door was a house full of dog crap and I was the only one to clean it up. The smell was so bad, I couldn't even fix something to eat until I scooped up all the turds.

So I figure I suffered and paid the price for my devotion to the 1972 Dolphins. I'd like to keep thinking they are the most special team of all time, but if the Patriots win, they will deservedly replace them. Even if they wouldn't beat the 1985 Chicago Bears.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	34	7	.829	
Toronto	24	19	.558	11
New Jersey	18	25	.419	17
Philadelphia	16	28	.364	19 1/2
New York	14	28	.333	20 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	27	18	.600	
Washington	23	18	.561	2
Atlanta	18	21	.462	6
Charlotte	17	26	.395	9
Miami	8	33	.195	17

Central Division

Detroit	31	13	.705	
Cleveland	23	19	.548	7
Indiana	19	25	.432	12
Chicago	17	25	.405	13
Milwaukee	17	27	.386	14

WESTERN CONFERENCE

SOUTHWEST DIVISION

New Orleans	30	12	.714	
Dallas	29	13	.690	1
San Antonio	28	13	.683	1 1/2
Houston	24	19	.558	6 1/2
Memphis	12	31	.279	18 1/2

Northwest Division

Denver	26	16	.619	
Portland	25	18	.581	1 1/2
Utah	25	18	.581	1 1/2
Seattle	9	34	.209	17 1/2
Minnesota	7	35	.167	19

Pacific Division

Phoenix	31	13	.705	
L.A. Lakers	27	14	.659	2 1/2
Golden State	26	18	.591	5
Sacramento	18	24	.429	12
L.A. Clippers	13	26	.333	15 1/2

Friday's Games

Toronto 106, Milwaukee 75
Phoenix 110, Cleveland 108
Washington 104, Memphis 93
Detroit 101, Orlando 93
Boston 87, Minnesota 86
New York 89, Philadelphia 81
New Orleans 111, L.A. Clippers 92
Charlotte 90, Chicago 77
Dallas 112, L.A. Lakers 105
Denver 100, New Jersey 85
Utah 127, Sacramento 113
Houston 89, Portland 79
Atlanta 99, Seattle 90

BUICK INVITATIONAL SCORES

Tiger Woods	67	65	132
Kevin Streelman	67	69	136
Stewart Cink	68	69	137
Aaron Baddeley	71	67	138
Boo Weekley	72	66	138
Brad Adamonis	66	72	138
Stuart Appleby	67	72	139
John Senden	70	69	139
Nathan Green	68	72	140
Bill Haas	72	68	140
Jeff Quinney	69	71	140
Charles Howell III	68	72	140
Joe Durant	70	70	140
Dean Wilson	69	71	140
Robert Allenby	70	70	140
Carlos Franco	71	69	140
John Mallinger	74	66	140
Hunter Mahan	71	69	140
Troy Matteson	65	75	140
Kenneth Ferrie	73	67	140
Fred Couples	71	69	140
Doug LaBelle II	68	72	140
Kevin Sutherland	73	68	141
Ryuji Imada	69	72	141
Vijay Singh	73	68	141
Jim Furyk	73	68	141
Camilo Villegas	69	72	141
Shigeki Maruyama	71	71	142
Frank Lickliter II	72	70	142
Kevin Stadler	68	74	142
John Rollins	71	71	142
Rod Pampling	70	72	142
Briny Baird	71	71	142
Dustin Johnson	72	70	142
Parker McLachlin	69	73	142
Steve Elkington	71	71	142
Carl Pettersson	70	72	142
Rory Sabbatini	67	75	142
Matt Jones	72	70	142
Matt Kuchar	71	72	143
Marc Turnesa	73	70	143
Cliff Kresge	76	67	143
Phil Mickelson	70	73	143
Jeff Maggert	71	72	143
Justin Bolli	74	69	143
Chris Stroud	73	70	143
Jon Mills	73	70	143
Bubba Watson	73	71	144
Sean O'Hair	76	68	144
Craig Barlow	71	73	144
Tag Ridings	73	71	144
Tim Herron	72	72	144
Brett Wetterich	72	72	144
Mark O'Meara	72	72	144
Jason Day	72	72	144
Roland Thatcher	73	71	144
Tom Pernice, Jr.	71	73	144
Steve Marino	74	70	144
Jason Gore	73	71	144
Justin Leonard	76	68	144
J.B. Holmes	71	73	144
George McNeill	72	72	144
Cody Freeman	70	74	144
Jin Park	71	73	144
Travis Perkins	76	68	144
Jamie Lovemark	73	71	144

By The Associated Press

The Week in Sports

230 runners join Winter fest of runs

JON PEREZ

Saipan Stevedore Suns' Mitch Aaron, right, tries to look for an open teammate while being guarded by the Bombers' Bruce Berline, left, and Spencer Johnson, partly hidden in their playoff match last Wednesday in the BANMI-Budweiser Cup Men's Islandwide Basketball League.

JON PEREZ

Mamiko Oshima of Saipan smiles as she crosses the finish line after topping the women's full marathon event of last week's Winter Festival of Runs.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan's Eli Torgeson raises his arms in victory after winning the men's half marathon edition of last week's Winter Festival of Runs.

JON PEREZ

Tim Wesley of the Saipan Stevedore Suns tries to gain control of the ball while being guarded by the Bombers' Richard Brostrom in their playoff match last Wednesday in the BANMI-Budweiser Cup Men's Islandwide Basketball League.

MARK RABAGO

Wakai Nekko No Kai Friendship Golf Tournament runner-up Nick Sablan received his cash prize from Northern Marianas College president Carmen Fernandez last Wednesday at the Coral Ocean Point Golf Resort poolside. Also in photo are Saipan Mayor's Office public information officer Anthony Benavente and the reigning Liberation Royal Princess.

MARK RABAGO

Ralph Yumul, Fil-Taga Golf Association's 2007 Golfer of the Year champion, poses with his trusty putter at the family owned Do It Best Hardware Friday following an interview with the *Saipan Tribune.*

MARK RABAGO

Wakai Nekko No Kai Friendship Golf Tournament fourth placer Jess Wabol received his cash prize from Northern Marianas College president Carmen Fernandez last Wednesday at the Coral Ocean Point Golf Resort poolside. Also in photo are Saipan Mayor's Office public information officer Anthony Benavente and the reigning Liberation Royal Princess.

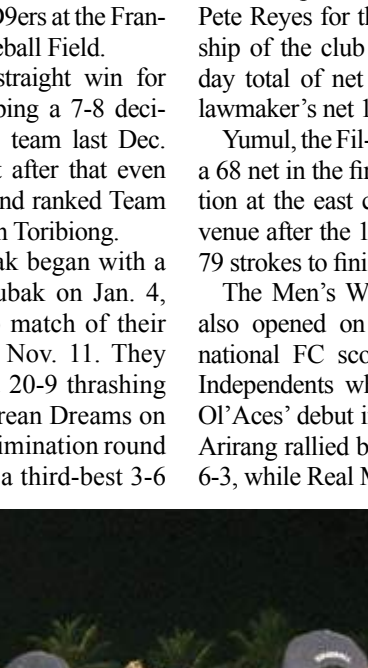
By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The 2008 edition of the Winter Festival of Runs attracted a total of 230 runners from Guam, Japan, Saipan, and Tinian where 47 conquered the full marathon course while 73 chose to run the half marathon while the other 110 opted for the 10-kilomter event.

Japanese runners Nobuyuki Yamamoto and Mamiko Oshima, who now calls Saipan her adopted home, overcame the challenge to rule the 3rd Annual Saipan Marathon last week held at Micro Beach at the American Memorial Park.

In the half marathon, Saipan's Eli Torgeson established a new record in the men's side while 18-year-old Amy Atkinson of Guam was the fastest among the 33 other female runners.

Another record fell in the men's 10K run when Japan's Kazuyohi Tokumoto established a new time while Terry Atkinson of Guam topped the women's division.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Japan's Nobuyuki Yamamoto reacts as he touches the tape to rule the men's full marathon of the Winter Festival of Runs.

In the Masters Baseball League finals, Atty. Bob O'Connor Tigers fulfilled its date with destiny Wednesday night after pulling off a 12-6 win over the Saipan Stevedore D9ers at the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field.

It was the fourth straight win for the Tigers since dropping a 7-8 decision against the same team last Dec. 29. They had not lost after that even beating twice the second ranked Team Rubak of Atty. Johnson Toribiong.

Their winning streak began with a 21-11 crushing of Rubak on Jan. 4, which was a makeup match of their rained-out game last Nov. 11. They followed it up with a 20-9 thrashing of the Viva Poker Korean Dreams on Jan. 5 for their final elimination round game that gave them a third-best 3-6 record heading into the playoffs.

They went up against Rubak in the playoffs where they trailed the head-to-head match up at 1-2. They evened things up after a 9-7 win to foil the planned Rubak-D9ers finals match.

Benjamin Jones also made headlines after topping the Wakai Nekko No Kai Friendship Golf Tournament last Wednesday at the Coral Ocean Point Golf Resort.

The 50-something former PSS physical education instructor finished the double Peoria-format competition with the best net score of 70.2 after going 43 in the front nine and a 44 in the back for a gross of 87. His handicap for the tourney was 16.8.

Another similar running event, organized by he eighth grade class of the Seventh Day Adventist School, took place in Monday's celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Steven Pixley and Mieko Carey were at it again, this time ruling the 2nd Annual Freedom Run.

Ralph Yumul won the 2007 Golfer of the Year of the Fil-Taga Golf Association held last weekend at the Laolao Bay Golf Resort.

The 36-year-old general manager of YCO Corp. beat out Senate President Pete Reyes for the yearend championship of the club after shooting a two-day total of net 140 compared to the lawmaker's net 145.

Yumul, the Fil-Taga June Ace, carded a 68 net in the first day of the competition at the east course of the Kagman venue after the 11-handicapper needed 79 strokes to finish the 18 holes.

The Men's Winter Football League also opened on Jan. 20 with Multinational FC scoring a 3-1 win over Independents while Onwel foiled the Ol'Aces' debut in a 10-0 blanking. FC Arirang rallied back to beat rival Inter, 6-3, while Real Mariana drew a bye.

JON PEREZ

The Atty. Bob O'Connor-sponsored Tigers exchange high five's at home plate after beating the Saipan Stevedore D9ers in last Wednesday's finals of the Masters Baseball League at the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field.

Djokovic upends Federer at Australian

Roger Federer is the first to admit he pays a steep price for all his success. One by one, players try to knock him off, and with each match and each victory expectations grow.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Winter fest of runs attracts 230 runners

The 2008 edition of the Winter Festival of Runs attracted a total of 230 runners from Guam, Japan, Saipan, and Tinian where 47 conquered the full marathon course while 73 chose to run the half marathon while the other 110 opted for the 10-kilomter event.

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Marvelous Maria wins Aussie Open crown

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Maria Sharapova won the Australian Open without losing a set, clinching her third Grand Slam title with a 7-5, 6-3 win over Ana Ivanovic in Saturday's women's final.

Fifth-seeded Sharapova was back in a final at a major for the first time since her 6-1, 6-2 loss to Serena Williams here last year and determined to make amends for that against a fellow 20-year-old.

After Ivanovic sprayed a forehand wide on match point, Sharapova dropped to her knees and appeared to be fighting back tears as she waved and blew kisses to the crowd.

Then she dropped her racket in her chair before heading to shake hands and exchange high fives with her father and supporters.

She clasped her hands and swayed as she stood, waiting to receive the Daphne Akhurst Trophy, then told the Rod Laver Arena crowd that she'd received a text message from tennis great Billie Jean King telling her that 'champions take chances and pressure is a privilege.'

"I took mine," she said. Sharapova wished her mother, Yelena, a happy birthday and told her: "With this big fat check, I'm going to send you a bunch of roses."

The Russian star was aggressive from the start and, apart from one bad service game in the first set that allowed Ivanovic back to 4-4, controlled the important points against a Serbian player for the second consecutive match.

She beat No. 3 Jelena Jankovic in the semifinals after ending top-ranked Justine Henin's 32-match winning streak in the quarterfinals.

Ivanovic is now 0-2 in Grand Slam finals—she lost the French Open championship match to Henin last year.

Ivanovic saved two match points but sprayed a forehand wide to give Sharapova the title, to go with her wins at Wimbledon in 2004 and the 2006 U.S. Open.

On a hot, sunny day with temperatures touching 34 Celsius (93 F), people in the crowd were fanning themselves, and Sharapova retreated to the shade behind the baselines to gather herself between points.

It was Australia Day, so organizers put small national flags at each seat. But there were plenty of Serbian and Russian flags, too.

Most of the signs scattered around packed Rod Laver Arena were pretty clear, including one that said "Quiet please Maria," referring to Sharapova's high-pitched grunts that get louder and louder as pressure rises.

Both players showed some nerves in the first

See MARVELOUS on Page 27

Russia's Maria Sharapova holds the trophy after beating Serbia's Ana Ivanovic during the final of the Women's singles at the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne, Australia, yesterday.
AP

OFF THE BENCH

By BOB COLDEEN

Coldeen is longtime sports journalist in the CNMI and is the sports director of KSPN 2.

Super, I guess

Why is it that I cannot get myself to root for Randy Moss? Or Eli Manning? Or the Patriots? Or the Giants? I don't have a dog in this fight.

Last year I rooted for the Colts to win the Super Bowl because Tony Dungy graciously gave my family a guided tour of the Bucs training facility and let us meet players such as Mike Alstott, Warren Sapp, Warrick Dunn, and Derrick Brooks. He went out of his way to be sociable. Compare that to breaking spy rules and you can see why I admire Dungy much more than Bill Belichik. Cardboard boxes have more personality than Belichik.

When Jacksonville got the Jaguars, they became my second favorite team behind the Bucs. Imagine my chagrin when initial head coach Tom Coughlin ran the program like it was a juvenile detention center with his silly little rules. After a few years, the Jags hit bottom and I wasn't the only one blaming the coach.

Tom Brady dates a supermodel, has movie star looks, millions of dollars in the bank, and more Super Bowl rings than I have arms. So why should I hope he gets more? He's doing okay already.

Who am I supposed to root for? Lawrence Tynes? I don't even know why they don't call him Larry.

I supposed I could root for Jabar Gaffney because of the Gators connection. He was lucky to make the Florida team after swiping stuff in the locker room during a visit when he was a high school senior. A couple years later, a kid was stupid enough to try to steal Gaffney's campus scooter. Gaffney chased him down and threw him in a wishing well where he kept dunking

See SUPER on Page 27

Leaders try to perpetuate streaks

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Aqua Resort Club and Asia Pacific Hotels Inc. (Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan, Saipan Grand Hotel, and Century Hotel) are expected to continue their winning streaks in the regular weekend tripleheader of the 2007-2008 HANMI Cup-Inter-Hotel Basketball League today at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Aqua Resort will be seeking win No. 5 against no loss when it tangles with a 1-3 Saipan World Resort squad in the 3pm first game.

The Achugao hotel will once again rely on its stratospheric frontline of Glenn Aquino, Eric Dalangin, Darwin Barbom and Gil Gapor and its May-September backcourt of Rick Alegre and Ziddy Johannes when it takes on the lightweight World Resort crew bannered by explosive guards Dennis Vinas and Jerryfel Mangahis.

APHI, sporting a 3-1 win-loss card, will go for its third straight win when it takes on winless Aquarius Beach Tower Hotel in the 4:30pm second game.

The Fiesta-Grand-Century side is as deadly as ever with its dynamic shoot-first guards Elmer Esdrelon and Ryan Sanaciango leading the way. Also aiding the APHI cause are bull-strong forwards Tom Alegre and Ferdie de la Torre and do-it-all swingman William Opone.

Expected to lead newcomer Aquarius, meanwhile, are Rotary veteran Jason Bahillo and former Cabalen swingman George Barbo. HANMI Cup, so far, hasn't been welcoming to the Chalan Kanoa hotel as it has absorbed three straight loses since joining the league this year.

The third and final game of Sunday's trifecta will then pit Hyatt (1-1) and Pacific Islands Club (1-2), two teams with championship aspirations, in the 6m scheduled match.

Hyatt and PIC has had lackluster starts, but that's because they have opened their schedule against powerhouses Aqua Resort and PIC.

Hyatt will continue to lean on its Mutt

See LEADERS on Page 27